Man who stole birds, car jack gets 2-year prison sentence. PAGE 3
Another SIS student is awarded QuestBridge scholarship. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

75¢

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Students of Saipan Southern High School put together the bags of trash that were collected at Coral Ocean Point during the beach cleanup organized by the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality last Saturday. Aside from household trash, volunteers also found nine gallons of used cooking oil dumped in one of the pavilions.
IVA MAURIN

9 gallons of used oil dumped at COP

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Nine gallons of used cooking oil were found dumped at Coral Ocean Point last Saturday by volunteers of the beach cleanup organized by the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

BECQ Toxic Waste Management's Leonardo Sanchez said the gallons of used cooking oil

See COP on **Page 4**

No COVID vaccine for kids just yet

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 7, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,004	0	7,004
Recovered	6,056	0	6,056
Active	835	0	835
Deaths	113	0	113
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			85,864

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	109	0	109
Traced via Travel Screening	80	0	83
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			110

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The CHCC COVID-19 dashboard will be undergoing maintenance until further notice.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the CNMI expecting to receive a batch of COVID-19 vaccines this month or early next month, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is getting ready to roll out the vaccination process in three phases, but not including children.

See COVID on **Page 4**

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
Red: Least safe
Orange
Yellow
Blue
Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Browne asks for court-appointed lawyer

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC chief executive officer Donald Browne has asked the federal court to appoint a lawyer to represent him as he faces possible incarceration, claiming that he is financially unable to pay for his own attorney.

In a declaration filed with the U.S District Court for the NMI, Browne said that when he took up the position as IPI CEO, the position came with a 30% cut to his salary.

Browne

"I took a 30% pay cut when I became CEO. The company is not able to pay its employees or to sustain operations. All employees, including myself, have not been paid since Sept. 25, 2020," he said.

Because of the pay cut and being furloughed prior to tak-

See BROWNE on **Page 4**

DR Safety owner accuses IPI of resuming construction without safety inspectors

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former safety consultant of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC said yesterday that IPI resumed construction work at its casino/hotel project in Garapan since Monday with a new consultant that has no special inspectors.

IPI chief executive officer Donald Browne said yesterday that they asked all employees to refrain from working until back wages have been paid. "I'll check on their compliance," Browne said.

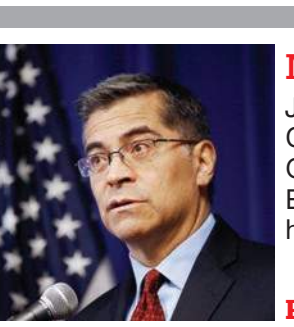
He earlier stated that the owner of IPI's safety consultant, DR Safety, whom he named as "Dave," is just upset and that negotiation with

See IPI on **Page 4**

INSIDE

LOCAL
The House of the Representatives' minority bloc will host a town hall meeting on PUA.
PAGE 2

BUSINESS
Music Bank started as a karaoke joint before the owner transitioned to the food industry.
PAGE 11



NATION
Joe Biden has picked California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be his health secretary.
PAGE 12

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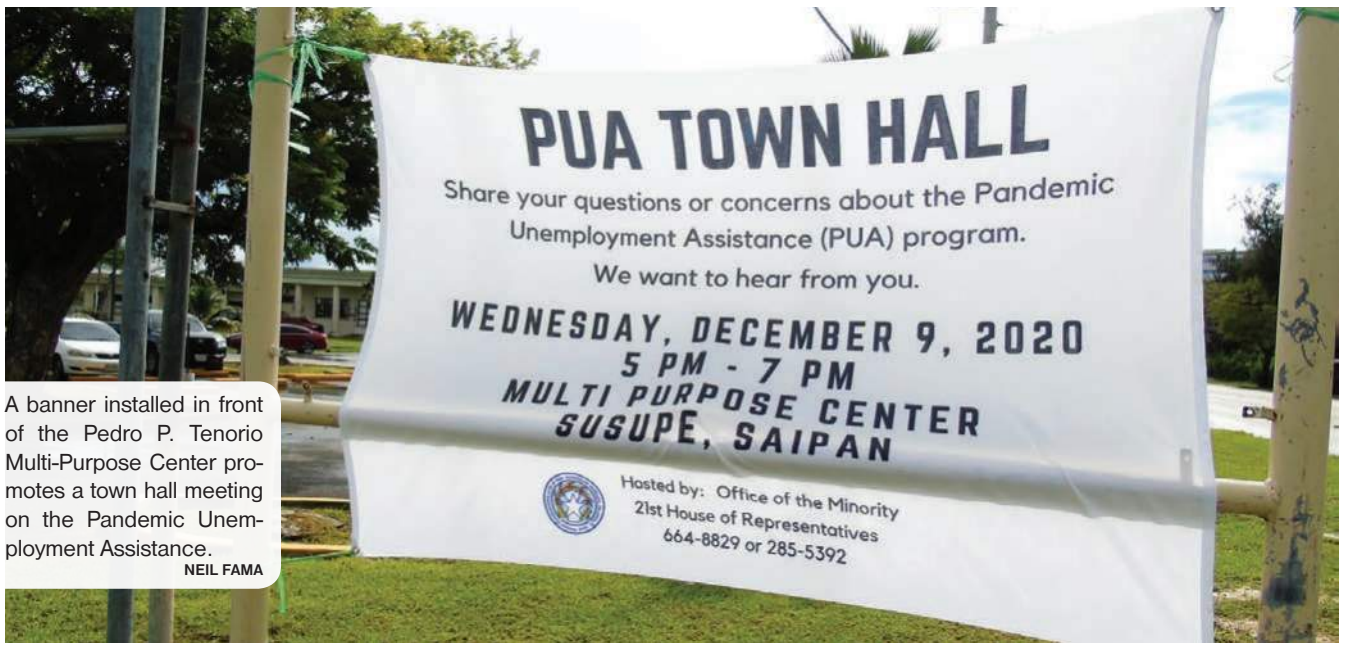
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21st House of Representatives
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A banner installed in front of the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center promotes a town hall meeting on the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.
NEIL FAMA

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Local

House minority bloc to host town hall meeting on PUA

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Members of House of the Representatives' minority bloc will host a town hall meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe to hear some concerns and questions from the public about the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. The meeting will be from 5pm to 7pm.

House minority leader Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) said she and Reps. Franklin R. Babauta (Ind-Saipan), Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Sheila Babauta (D-Saipan), Richard Lizama (Ind-Saipan), and Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota) will receive oral and written testimonies from constituents on their experiences with the PUA program.

The bloc also invited other lawmakers, Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente, Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig, the Office of the Public Auditor, and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) to attend, although it was not clear if they will be present at the meeting.

Sablan said their goal is to better understand the issues affecting implementation and the delivery of PUA services, and how these issues can be resolved going forward. "This is especially important in the event that federal unemployment assistance is extended beyond Dec. 31, and as we consider establishing a CNMI unemployment insurance program," she said.

Several people have been complaining in social media posts and in a Facebook group dedicated to the PUA program about either not receiving their benefits yet or questioning the disbursement of funds.

Last week, Labor disclosed that, as of Nov. 18, 2020, the department and Finance have disbursed of $108.4 million PUA and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits to eligible claimants. Labor said that number is set to increase by approximately $26.3 million, barring any returns due to bank rejections, overpayments, or fraudulent applications. Labor also provided the public with the latest updates regarding the programs.

NMTI wants to open for PSS students

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Agnes McPhetres, chief executive officer of the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, wants to open up the school to accommodate students from the Public School System, while also proposing to open the institute in three phases for its students.

During the NMTI regular board meeting last Wednesday, McPhetres told the board of directors that Da'ok Academy is the school's only source of additional income and the only one keeping their institute running. This is because Da'ok Academy is renting parts of the NMTI building, which is why McPhetres wants NMTI to be opened to PSS and to strengthen their partnership with PSS—as an additional means of revenue.

This comes as McPhetres is pushing for the reopening of NMTI in phases: Phase 1 would involve classes that are essential and can start immediately. Included in this are the classes in March that were suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic. McPhetres wanted to resume those classes so students can complete the modules.

At the same time, NMTI has an outstanding arrangement with PSS over some courses. "We have a commitment that we have to do immediately. For example, we have a contract with PSS for electrical and maintenance courses. We have not fulfilled that obligation. They are under Phase 1 and I would like as much as possible that they could continue," she said.

As for the other phases, Phase 2 and Phase 3, McPhetres did not clarify what these phases entail; she said these will be discussed at the next board meeting on Dec. 8.

McPhetres added that they have some leftover CNMI-Only Transitional Worker funds, which will allow them to reopen as soon as possible.

While the online registration is still in the works, McPhetres has asked the instructors to contact their students in order to give them the idea of how many students are willing to register for the new term, which she suggested in January.

Man who stole birds, hydro jack gets 2-year prison sentence

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

A man who pleaded guilty to stealing pigeons, a bird cage, and a hydraulic jack was sentenced to a two-year term in prison.

Ronald Jr. Leon Guerrero Ealey, 28, pleaded guilty last week before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho to two counts of theft in two different cases: one involving the theft of pigeons and a bird cage, and one involving a hydraulic jack from a tire shop in Kagman.

Ealey

Camacho sentenced Ealey to one-year imprisonment for the case involving the stolen birds, with 351 days suspended. Ealey was ordered to serve the remaining 14 days of his sentence day-by-day with no possibility of parole or early release.

In the case involving the stolen jack, Camacho sentenced Ealey to a term of one year, with 686 days suspended. That means he will be imprisoned for 30 days.

Ealey was remanded back to the custody of the Department of Corrections to serve his sentence, which would run concurrently with one another. He is scheduled to be released on Dec. 9 and will be placed on supervised probation for two years.

Ealey was also ordered to serve community service, pay a $100 fine, $25 court fee, $120 probation fee yearly, and $70 restitution.

When the court gave Ealey the chance to speak, not under oath, about the incident, he said he went to the home of the victim who owned the pigeons with the intent to sell him chickens. However, he instead saw the bird cage with two pigeons and eggs inside and decided to take them.

In the case of the stolen hydro jack, Ealey said he went to the tire shop in Kagman to service his tires. He saw the hydro jack just lying around and when no one was looking, he loaded the item in the back of his car and left.

A few days after stealing the jack, Ealey said he went back to the tire shop to return the stolen item, but Criminal Investigation Bureau officers were already there with the warrant for his arrest.

Ealey noted that he was contacted by CIB officers informing him that he was wanted for theft before returning the jack to the tire shop.

Senate OKs bill for special election in case of BOE vacancy

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Senate passed on first and final reading last week a bill that will require a special election to fill a Board of Education vacancy instead of the governor appointing someone in the absence of a certified candidate.

Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota), vice president Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), and Sens. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota), Paul A. Manglona (D-Rota), Francisco M. Borja (R-Tinian), Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), Sixto K. Igisomar (R-Saipan), and Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) voted for the passage of Senate Bill 21-66 in the form of Senate Substitute 1.

Sen. Justo S. Quitugua (R-Saipan), who chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Welfare who introduced the bill, was absent but was excused from the session.

The bill will now go to the House.

At the session last week, Hofschneider said the original intent of this bill was to authorize the Senate to examine for confirmation any gubernatorial appointee in the event of an unforeseen vacancy or unanticipated vacancy in the BOE. However, Hofschneider said, the Office of the Attorney General pointed out that Article 15 Section 1(c) of the NMI Constitution specifically says that the BOE shall have five members elected at large on a nonpartisan basis.

"As in the case of the original intent of the bill, we asked for advice and consent, but because of the citation made by the OAG to specifically say 'elected at large on a nonpartisan basis,' it immediately triggered the needed changes," he said.

Hofschneider said the bill was introduced because of the unexpected vacancy in the second senatorial district (Tinian) and this would establish the process in the event there's another vacancy.

Hocog said he believes it's wise that they act on this bill moving forward so that they don't have any questionable appointments. "So with this legislation it will address the issue moving forward," Hocog said.

The committee proposed to amend the law to reflect amendments as recommended by Attorney General Edward Manibusan to require for a special election to fill a vacancy under the BOE.

The BOE is composed of five voting members and three appointed, non-voting members, including a student representative. Each voting member serves a staggered four-year term. Elections for the BOE members are nonpartisan.

Quitugua introduced the bill last July and it was subsequently referred to his committee.

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Commonwealth marks Constitution Day

Editor's Note: The CNMI marks Constitution Day today. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios issued the following statement on Monday:

"Dec. 8 is a day that personifies our political and religious identity as a community. We celebrate the creation of our government and the progress we have made as a Commonwealth in political union with the United States. We also honor our islands' Catholic tradition of celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

"We commemorate the beginning of a journey four decades ago in a school auditorium where a group of 39 courageous leaders joined together under the idea of self-determination. With the words of our preamble, 'We the People of the Northern Mariana Islands,' they launched our story—our journey to the future we see today.

"The Commonwealth Constitution is the foundation of our government, and this "embodiment of our traditions and hopes" will remain our guiding force as we work to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, rebuild our economy, continue our typhoon recovery, ensure public safety in our villages, achieve our health care goals, expand educational opportunities for our students, and ensure economic prosperity for every single person who calls the Marianas home.

Torres

Palacios

"From our families to yours, may all of the CNMI have a safe and restful Constitution Day. Continue to remain vigilant during your social gatherings. The work of our COVID-19 Task Force, doctors, nurses, and first responders, as well as the cooperation of our community are why the CNMI is the safest place in the United States from COVID-19."

Federal financial aid available for NMC's spring 2021 semester

New college students who are looking to access federal financial aid for the Northern Marianas College's spring 2021 semester are encouraged to file a 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. Students should submit a FAFSA before the spring semester starts on Jan. 19, 2021.

Qualified students can receive up to $3,173 in federal financial aid for the spring 2021 semester. The Federal Financial Aid program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Through the program's various types of grants, loans, and scholarships, the Federal Financial Aid program is the largest financial aid provider in the U.S.

The FAFSA is available online at fafsa.ed.gov and can also be completed by using the myStudentAid smartphone app available for iOS and Android. NMC's school code is 015746.

To verify eligibility for Pell Grants, applicants can contact the NMC Financial Aid Office through email at fao@marianas.edu.

NMC's spring semester offers virtual and online business, education, math, nursing, and science courses. For more information about the Spring 2021 Semester, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

COP

From Page 1

were found in one of the pavilions along the beach, where, at the time of the cleanup, it was suspected that some of the oil had already leaked to the beach, with one of the containers already found empty.

"…We assumed that the oil probably already leaked out of the gallon and is already gone...but then most of them were still intact, so we put them in bags. We double-bagged each gallon just to make sure that they don't leak out when we dump them [at] the transfer station," he said.

Sanchez pointed out that dumping used cooking oil on beaches is detrimental to marine life, particularly corals. "People dumping used cooking oil along the beach would affect marine life, especially because they literally dumped it right by where the water is, really close to the shore, which is very irresponsible."

Aside from the gallons of used oil, volunteers, mostly students from Saipan Southern High School, also found bags of household trash, which included a carpet, used clothes, and some labeled document folders. The pavilions, as well as the beach, were also littered with beer cans and water bottles.

One of the volunteers, Saipan Southern High School student Queenie Torwan, called for the community to be responsible when spending time at the beach.

"We're picking up trash, which is important because it will help the environment. [For the community], I suggest that when they come here and they enjoy themselves and have fun, that they take back their trash with them when they leave, instead of leaving it behind," she said.

Some of the cleanup volunteers also suggested the collection of a flat trash collection fee, with the money to be used to build a recycling plant facility in the CNMI. It was also suggested that manufacturers of plastic bottles and aluminum cans be charged for disposal, where they have to pay or they would not be allowed to ship products into the island.

Proper waste management could be costly, Sanchez concedes, but he appealed for everyone to "be responsible and mature about it."

"Dispose of your trash, dispose of your used oil properly. Transfer stations can accept them. There are all the agencies out there that can help guide you on where to dump these kinds of hazardous waste, instead of just dumping it at some beach. This is your island, take care of your own island," he added.

To report illegal dumping of used oil, contact BECQ's Toxic Waste Management office at (670) 664-8505. To volunteer for the next cleanup, contact 664-8500/1.

COVID

From Page 1

This is because the clinical trials that were held this year on the vaccines tested their efficacy only on adults, and health experts are saying additional studies need to be done on the vaccine's effects on children, which could take several more months.

CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña clarified this early that the vaccines, once they arrive, will only be made available to adults in the CNMI. As of press time, she has not clarified the age limit for whom the vaccines will be administered.

Muña said the vaccines are expected to come this month or January 2021. It was earlier reported that the CNMI has already purchased 10 ultra-cold refrigerators where the vaccines will be stored.

"To date, very few children have been part of the clinical trials," Muña explained.

Right now, the vaccine's maker, Pfizer, and its partner, BioNTech, are still waiting for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to grant an Emergency Use Authorization on the COVID-19 vaccine. The American Academy of Pediatrics earlier called on researchers to enroll children in the clinical trials to examine the dosages and number of doses that will work for children.

In previous interviews, Muña said that CHCC's goal is to vaccinate 95% of the CNMI population. This will put the CNMI beyond the minimum 70% needed for herd immunity, when vaccinated people provide immunity cover for those who are unvaccinated.

CHCC, according to Muna, will offer a mass vaccination opportunity that is similar to the community-based testing, where people will have to register first and get their schedule for vaccination.

They will also seek help from community partners and the CNMI government to ensure more people will register. By following the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' proposal, CHCC will vaccinate health workers and front-line responders in the first and second phases.

The third phase will be for the rest of the community.

Meanwhile, health officials are warning people not to let their guards down. With a COVID-19 vaccine perhaps just days away in the U.S., many parts of the United States are experiencing surging outbreaks and top health officials warned Americans that this is no time to let their guard down.

"The vaccine's critical," Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "But it's not going to save us from this current surge. Only we can save us from this current surge."

A n FDA advisory panel is scheduled to take up a request Thursday (Friday in the CNMI) to authorize emergency use of Pfizer's vaccine. Vaccinations could begin just days later, though initial supplies will be rationed, and shots are not expected to become widely available until the spring. ***(With AP)***

BROWNE

From Page 1

ing up the CEO position, Browne said he has no savings and he has no income and therefore will be unable to pay for a lawyer to represent him.

"As a result of having been on furlough without pay for about four months, and then not having been paid for more than the last two months, I have no savings. I am married but my wife is not employed right now. We have two minor children, a 4-year-old and a 4-month-old. I have no income. Therefore, I am not able to afford to hire an attorney. I request that the court appoint counsel for me as I am facing incarceration," he said.

Browne said he became CEO at IPI on July 17 for a period of six months ending in January 2021. Prior to becoming CEO, he was IPI's senior vice president of Security and Surveillance. He has worked for IPI since January 2015 and has worked in the casino industry for 40 years.

Browne claims that his employment as a CEO was a stopgap measure. The last IPI CEO, Mark Brown, resigned his position, as did the chief financial officer, Ed Chen.

"The Commonwealth Casino Commission required that IPI have a CEO, so I was offered the chance to come back from furlough and take the position for a period of six months," he said.

Browne says IPI has been experiencing financial difficulties since late 2019 and had to close back in March and then eventually furloughed about 545 employees. "I was furloughed myself in April 2020. My employment did not resume until I was hired as the CEO on July 17, 2020," he said.

IPI

From Page 1

that company will work out eventually, and that if Dave has a disagreement with IPI or other persons, he should seek legal assistance.

The owner of DR Safety Consultant LLC, who asked that his identity be withheld at this time, pointed out yesterday that, according to the Department of Public Works, if DR Safety cancels its contract with IPI, then DPW is going to re-issue its stop-work order against IPI.

The DR Safety owner said he has talked with Gani Salazar, a representative/inspector of the DPW Building Safety Code Division, who told him that he wrote IPI to get information about special inspectors and the engineer of record of the new company that it had hired vice DR Safety, and that DPW is giving IPI and the new company 10 days to provide documents.

The DR Safety owner said this should not happen because Salazar earlier stated that if DR Safety pulls out because of non-payment of services, DPW will re-issue a stop order.

"Now they are working 10 days against the regulation," he said.

He said it's unsafe for the workers at the site due to lack of safety special inspectors and engineer of record.

He previously stated that IPI forced DR Safety to open the site on the promise of payment, but there has been no such payment until now.

The DR Safety owner said they have done so much work in the past three years for IPI with no Occupational Safety and Health Administration and DPW violations.

Last Nov. 25, DPW lifted its stop-work order against IPI.

Salazar told the Commonwealth Casino Commission last Nov. 25 that it has allowed IPI to resume construction work at the Imperial Pacific Resort building after IPI complied with DPW's Building Safety Code Division's requirements.

IPI received the stop-work order from DPW last Oct. 27.

In the stop-work order, DPW suspended all construction work until shop drawings and revised plans are submitted to and approved by DPW's building safety officer. DPW also suspended all welding work.

Four teachers certified as BOE teacher rep nominees

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada has certified four nominees as teacher representatives of the Public School System for the Board of Education.

The four teachers are Phyllis Ain of William S. Reyes Elementary School, Frank Lee Borja of Saipan Southern High School, Lizabeth Hofschneider of Tinian Junior High School, and Kyle Munn of Kagman High School. Ada said they met the eligibility requirements for the teacher representative election.

The electronic voting for general elections started last Dec. 2 and will end today, Dec. 8. Under the BOE policy, teacher representatives have to undergo three elections—primary, general, and runoff elections.

In the primary election, a teacher attempting to run for the position can announce his/her candidacy. There are no limits to the number of teachers who can run, while schools can have multiple candidates. The commissioner shall certify the qualifying candidates and place their names on the ballot for voting. After the voting, the process will then proceed to the general election.

The Top 5 candidates of the primary election shall be on the ballot for the general election. This year, there are only four eligible candidates.

The Top 2 candidates with the most votes will again compete in a runoff election, which is the final leg of selecting the teacher representative for BOE. The two candidates with the most votes are automatically placed on the ballot for the runoff election, in which the commissioner will announce the date and time when the polls will open and close.

All elections are held electronically and teachers can cast their votes through a voting portal available on the PSS website.

Man who punched his aunt gets 6-month suspended prison sentence

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a six-month prison sentence on a man punched his aunt in a fit of rage.

Zeric Gant, 21, pleaded guilty to assault and battery before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho and was sentenced to a prison term of six months, all suspended, with credit for time served.

Gant was released last week and was placed under supervised probation for a year.

In addition, Gant was ordered to pay $25 in court costs and a $120 supervision fee, and to stay away from the victim.

Gant must also complete 40 hours of community service that may be converted to fines at a rate of $7.50 per hour, subject to approval by the Office of Adult Probation.

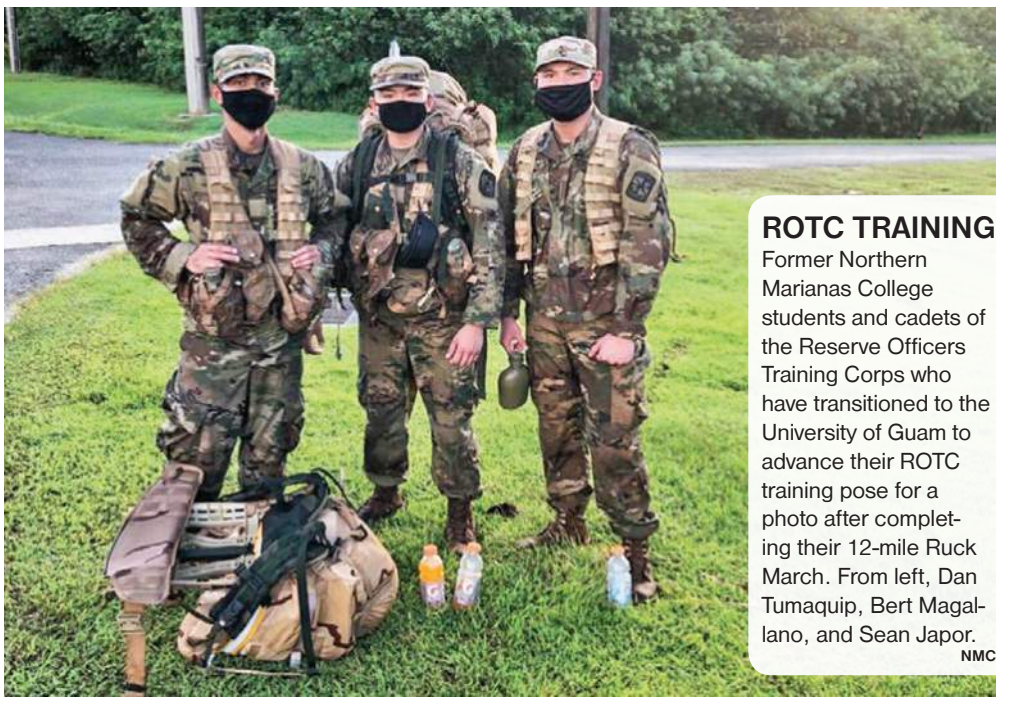
Gant was represented by assistant public defender Karie Comstock, while assistant attorney general Steven C. Kessell appeared for the CNMI government.

According to court documents, police arrested Gant on June 15, 2020, for punching his aunt inside a vehicle.

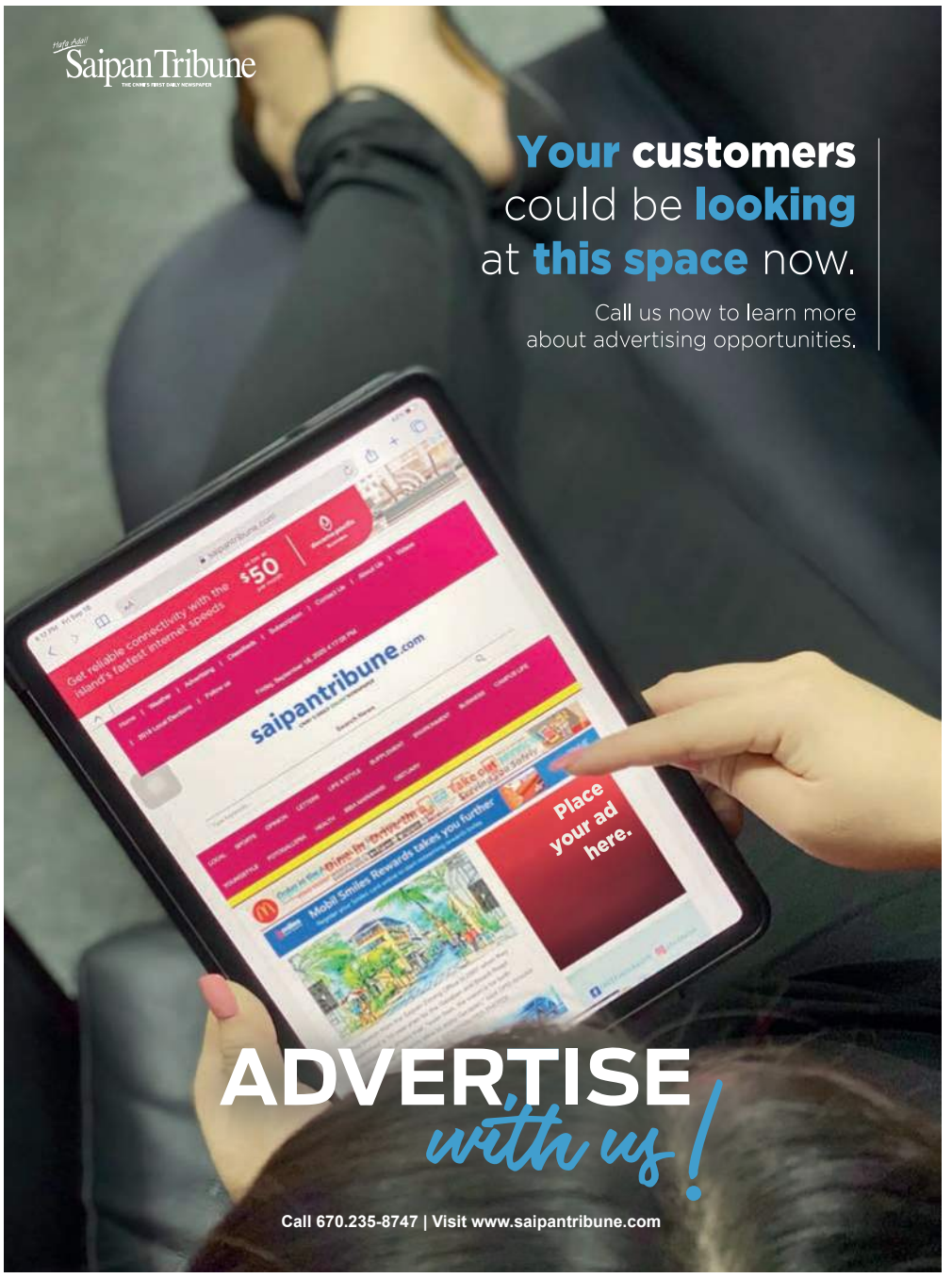
The victim told police that she was taking Gant to Saipan Health Clinic because Gant's hand had been injured. On the way to the clinic, she said Gant started acting differently, was allegedly rocking back and forth in his seat, and started rubbing his thighs and knuckles together. Gant then told the victim that he was going kill her.

She felt scared, but did not say anything and just kept driving until Gant punched her on the right side of her face with his left hand.

The victim continued driving Gant to the clinic. Upon arriving there, she registered Gant and used the front desk phone to call for help as she did not have her cellphone on her at that time.



ROTC TRAINING
Former Northern Marianas College students and cadets of the Reserve Officers Training Corps who have transitioned to the University of Guam to advance their ROTC training pose for a photo after completing their 12-mile Ruck March. From left, Dan Tumaquip, Bert Magallano, and Sean Japor.
NMC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Saipan Tribune
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Place your ad here.
ADVERTISE with us!
Call 670.235-8747 | Visit www.saipantribune.com

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN
Christmas Tree Decorating & Toy Drive
We will be collecting new unwrapped toys.
Join us on
Thursday Dec. 10th 2020
4pm - 5pm @ PIC Lobby
Participants will receive:
Waterpark discount vouchers
30% discount at the Galley
Refreshments will be served
Mask required on property at all times.

TWO YEARS IN A ROW

Another SIS student is awarded QuestBridge scholarship

Saipan International School senior Frederic "Mac" Guintu was awarded a QuestBridge scholarship on Dec. 3, 2020, making this the second time in a row that an SIS student has been awarded a QuestBridge scholarship.

Guintu will attend Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, beginning in the fall of 2021 on a full scholarship.

SIS' first QuestBridge recipient last year was also accepted to Emory University.

"Emory University is one of the nation's top research universities and the No. 1 ranked pre-[medical] program in the [United States], which is very interesting to Mac," said SIS counselor Whit Altizer. "We are very proud that Mac has been accepted into the class of 2025 at Emory. This marks the second year in a row that an SIS graduate has been accepted to Emory. They must like Geckos!"

SIS

Saipan International School senior Frederic "Mac" Guintu is awarded a QuestBridge scholarship.

Guintu himself said, "All the hard work and effort I've struggled through during the 17 years of my life has paid off so well. I've never been more excited for my future when I opened the update saying I matched to Emory at 6 in the morning. The days before that were full of [anxiety] and sleepless nights, but after the message, it felt as if I were lifted to the moon and the stars and I shared this happiness with my friends who supported me through it all."

QuestBridge is a national program that connects high-achieving high school seniors from low-income backgrounds with full four-year scholarships to the nation's top colleges.

In addition to Guintu, SIS had two other finalists, Cindy Kim and Oliver Lee, who will receive free applications from a variety of partner colleges and become eligible to forward their National Match Application to schools that will accept it for QuestBridge Regular Decision.

This year's Match Scholarship Recipients come from 48 states, including the District of Columbia, as well as the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico.

These outstanding high school seniors have an average unweighted GPA of 3.93, and 94% are in the top 10% of their graduating class. Of the students who reported standardized testing, 82% scored above 1260 on the SAT and 84% scored above 27 on the ACT. Financially, 95% come from a household with an annual income under $65,000, and 87% qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. The majority of these new QuestBridge Scholars—78%—are among the first generation in their families to attend a four-year college in the United States.

"Mac is an incredible student who has thrived at every challenge that has been put in front of him," said SIS headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder. "He is our Student Council president, has represented the CNMI three years in a row at the National MathCourt Championships where he placed 10th one year. He is an AP Scholar with Distinction, a National Merit Scholarship finalist, one of the founding members of the CNMI Model United Nations team and an AP Capstone Diploma Candidate. His independent research on the causations of internet addiction, grounded in boredom analysis studies, promises to be very interesting. We are very proud of his achievements and wish him well at Emory where we are certain that he can maximize his academic potential." ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-DRP-002
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/PH-EHDI-001
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 6, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF DIAGNOSTIC AUTOMATED AUDITORY BRAINSTEM RESPONSE (AABR) MACHINE"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
JC Marketing Inc. (Saipan)

a Distribution Company,
is looking for
FIELD SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Candidates must be:
Highschool Graduate
Have at least 2 years
of Field Sales experience

Interested individuals
can submit resume via
email to
jcme@jcmarketinginc.com
or fax to 235-6336

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-OPIOID-001
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 22, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"SUD/OUD COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re General Order

NOTICE TO CLAIMANTS AND
ORDER TO APPEAR

THE COMMONWEALTH JUDICIARY has in its possession certain third party funds, which have remained unclaimed for more than one year. According to court records, the following people may be entitled to have funds returned to them

Name	Case Name	Case Number
1. Rodney C. Babauta	CNMI v. Rodney Camacho Babauta	CR-18-0028
2. Carmelino Jr. L Garcia	CNMI v. Carmelino Jr. L Garcia	TR -18-02788
3. Michael Adrian C. Sablan	CNMI v. Michael Adrian C. Sablan	TR-18-03380
4. Christopher Ching	CNMI v. Christopher Ching	TR-18-03092
5. Yongli LI	CNMI v. Qiaoqiao Chen	TR-18-02602
6. Angelo A. Tudela	CNMI v Angelo A. Tudela	TR-09-01510
7. Marianas Transportation	CNMI v. Marianas Transportation	TR-17-03450
8. Rommel S Rementilla	CNMI v. Rommel S Rementilla	TR-14-02853
9. Tailan Han	CNMI v. Tailan Han	TR-16-02506
10. Zhen Shen Zhang	CNMI v. Zhen Shen Zhang	TR-17-03917
11. ZHihong Liang	CNMI v. Zhihong Liang	TR-17-03879
12. Shae R. Stovell	CNMI v. Shae R. Stovell	TR-16-02388
13. Shu Kun Jiang	CNMI v. Shu Kun Jiang	TR-17-03347
14. Ye Fang	CNMI v. Ye Fang	TR-17-05279
15. Abegail Charpang Ayungo	CNMI v. Abegail Charpang Ayungo	TR-17-05601
16. Jesus P. Pineda	CNMI v. Jesus P. Pineda	TR-18-07758
17. Xiang Qian Huang	CNMI v. Xiang Qian Huang	TR-18-00609
18. Nathaniel Smith	CNMI v. Nathaniel Smith	TR-12-01059

The aforementioned parties shall have until Tuesday, June 8, 2021 to make a claim with the Judiciary for the return of these funds. In order to make a claim, parties must complete a form, which is available at the Clerk of Court's window. Upon completion, parties shall submit the original and two photocopies of the form, together with two photocopies of a valid passport and/or government-issued photo identification, to the Clerk of Court located at Marianas Business Plaza Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Claims must be submitted to the Clerk of Court and may be brought from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday of each week. Any funds belonging to the parties named above that remain unclaimed after Tuesday, June 8, 2021 may be forfeited and turned over to the Commonwealth General Fund. On June 11, 2021 all parties named above shall appear before Associate Judge Joseph Camacho at the Guma Hustisia at 10:00 a.m. and await the call of his or her claim by case number and captioned parties. Parties must bring a copy of their claim form with them when appearing for this court proceeding.

ENTERED December 8, 2020.

/s/
ROBERTO C. NARAJA
Presiding Judge

NORTHERN MARIANAS TRADES INSTITUTE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2020 10:00AM

AGENDA

I. Meeting Called to Order (Establishment of quorum)
II. Adoption of Agenda
III. Adoption of Minutes (Dec. 02, 2020)
IV. Public Comments
V. Reports
  A. Chairman
  B. CEO
    i. Governor's Letter to CEO
    ii. Meeting with Attorney Robert T. Torres
VI. Old Business
  A. Continuing partnership with PSS (Da'ok Academy)
  B. Re-Opening of NMTI classes in phases for (current and subsequent)
VII. New Business
  A. Ratification by Board of Directors
    i. Personnel Services Agreements of Faculty & Staff
    ii. Accounting Services Renewal
VIII. Adjournment

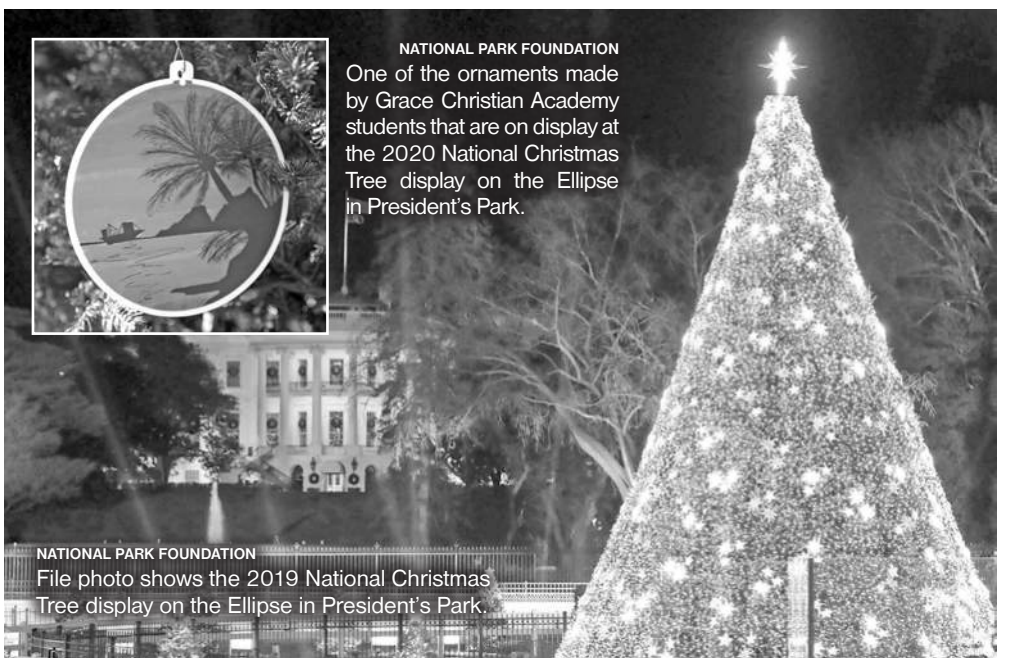
GCA students create ornaments for DC Christmas tree

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Students from 56 schools across the country, including from Grace Christian Academy in the CNMI, have designed one-of-a-kind ornaments for the 2020 National Christmas Tree display on the Ellipse in President's Park.

These unique ornaments will adorn 56 smaller trees that surround the National Christmas.

The trees represent each U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia as part of the *America Celebrates* ornament display. This year, several ornaments from each school will also be displayed inside the White House.

Besides GCA representing the CNMI, other U.S. territories are represented by Lupelele Elementary School (American Samoa), Agana Heights Elementary School (Guam), Escuela Dr. Francisco Hernández y Gaetán (Puerto Rico), and St. Croix Educational Complex High School (U.S. Virgin Islands).



NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION
One of the ornaments made by Grace Christian Academy students that are on display at the 2020 National Christmas Tree display on the Ellipse in President's Park.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION
File photo shows the 2019 National Christmas Tree display on the Ellipse in President's Park.

The *America Celebrates* ornament program is a collaboration of the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Park Foundation. The U.S. Department of Education worked through state art and education offices, which identified elementary, middle and high schools to participate in the *America Celebrates* program. The project is funded by the NPF.

From state flowers to notable landmarks, students created ornaments that celebrate their state, district or territory.

The *America Celebrates* display is one of the highlights of the National Christmas Tree experience. The virtual National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony was held last Thursday, Dec. 3, at thenationaltree.org. This year's show featured the recorded lighting of the National Christmas Tree, holiday performances and more. Due to COVID-19-related public health concerns, the NPS and NPF did not host a live audience this year. The show will be available to stream on-demand throughout the holiday season.

Every year one-of-a-kind ornaments are made by ordinary Americans, representing every U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia. These artists give their time and talents to design and create ornaments that symbolize the history, heritage and culture of their homelands. The *America Celebrates* display, which surrounds the National Christmas Tree, is free and open to visitors throughout December.

Watch the 2020 National Christmas Tree lighting ceremony and the America celebrates ornaments from across the USA in 2020 at https://thenationaltree.org. ***(PR)***

Rip currents in east-facing reefs

The public is being warned that there is a high rip current risk in effect through Thursday night on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents will be present along east-facing reefs of the Marianas.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are advised to avoid venturing out near reef lines facing east. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don`t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(PR)***

Learn about federal contracting in free webinars

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars for December 2020. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Dec. 10 – Responding to Requests for Proposals – We will walk participants through the common sections and clauses of an RFP as well as provide tips on developing a proposal in response to an RFP.

■ Dec. 17 – SBIR/STTR Programs – The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs encourage small businesses to engage in Federal Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. We will explain the programs and show how innovators can get involved.

■ Dec. 23 – Service Contract Act – The Service Contract Act requires contractors and subcontractors performing services on prime contracts in excess of $2,500 to pay service employees prevailing wages. We will discuss the details of the SCA and how contractors can stay in compliance.

■ Dec. 30 – Buy American Act – The Buy American Act can be frustrating for government contractors. The Guam PTAC will discuss the BAA and offer some guidance on how to stay in compliance.

Register on our website, http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-005

A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in ***365* calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-005, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

WEBINAR SERIES

AMERICA'S SBDC CNMI AMERICA'S SBDC GUAM

HOW TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS

DATE:
December 9, 2020

TIME:
8:00am-10:00am

FREE OF CHARGE

Angelica Camacho-Paulino,
GUAM SBDC Business Advisor/BOG WIB Program Coordinator

TO REGISTER:
HTTPS://PISBDCN.ECENTERDIRECT.COM/EVENTS/4690

This training will be conducted via Zoom. Upon registration you will be given the Zoom Meeting ID and Password to be able to join the webinar training. Please note that you will need a laptop or iPad to join.

For more information, visit our website at www.pacificsbdc.com or call CNMI SBDC Office at 664-3018.

Disclaimer: The CNMI Small Business Development Center (CNMI SBDC)is a member of the University of Guam Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center (PISBDCN). PISBDCN is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, please contact CNMI SBDC Nicole Babauta, P.O. Box 5795 CHRB Saipan, MP 96950, Tel: (670)664-3018, or Email cnmisbdc@pacificsbdc.com. Services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 243

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Lame-duck Congress must approve bipartisan stimulus bill

Gov. Larry Hogan, who seems to have found a second career in national political punditry if not office-seeking, offered a useful message for members of Congress this week including his fellow Republicans: Pass the compromise coronavirus economic relief package. "Every day I hear from small-business owners who say that without this help they may not be able to keep their doors open," Maryland's governor told reporters at a State House news conference Tuesday afternoon. "The time for partisan politics is over."

To which we would add: amen.

The $908 billion proposal is far less than the nearly $3 trillion in spending that House Democrats have already approved. It doesn't contain the direct aid (those $1,200 checks included in last spring's emergency relief) that so many Americans found so vital for keeping their finances afloat. And it has no support from the most difficult gatekeeper of all, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has already said he won't bring it to a vote (though he has pledged to support a smaller, so far unsubstantiated "targeted" relief effort).

But it's surely the best that can be had in the lame-duck session. It can be squeezed into legislation to prevent a government shutdown before Dec. 11. It has the support of enough Senate Republicans—including Mitt Romney, Lisa Murkowski, Susan Collins and Bill Cassidy—to pass the chamber with Democratic support. And it contains measures that were high on the economic stimulus wish list: help for small businesses, a continued boost in unemployment aid and relief for state governments reeling from a COVID-19-related drop in tax revenues.

Make no mistake, even with vaccines headed for FDA approval and perhaps distribution in a matter of weeks, maybe even days, the U.S. economy is far from out of the woods. Pay no attention to the investor class that is celebrating shockingly high returns on equities this year, many American families are still struggling. President-elect Joe Biden surely intends to offer a much-larger relief package after he's sworn into office Jan. 20, but that won't necessarily improve the odds of passage if the Georgia Senate runoff goes, as most observers predict, to one or more of the two GOP candidates. A COVID-19 second wave economic swoon under President Biden's watch may be just the sort of thing that Senator McConnell actually desires.

Yet McConnell's opposition now might be overcome. It would surely boost the Republican Party's brand in advance of the Georgia election to show some tangible sign of caring about the working class. At least it might offset President Donald Trump's increasingly irrational claims of a "stolen" election and international mail-in ballot conspiracies that even Attorney General Bill Barr isn't buying. To do nothing now, as the coronavirus hospitalizations spike,

See CONGRESS on Next Page

I SMOKE...
I DRINK...
AND I EAT JUNK FOOD.
ARE YOU GOING TO GET THE VACCINE?
I'M NOT PUTTING THAT IN MY BODY.
MIKE SMITH
LASVEGASSUN 2020 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

Warner Bros. will stream 2021 films on HBO Max, so time to make our homes more like movie theaters

By REX HUPPKE
Chicago Tribune

Rex Huppke is a Chicago Tribune *columnist. Readers may send him email at rhuppke@chicagotribune.com.*

With the coronavirus likely to keep people away from movie theaters well into the new year, Warner Bros. Pictures has decided to stream all its 2021 movies on HBO Max.

That means one thing: I finally have an excuse to buy a 3-quart, theater-quality fake-butter dispenser.

It stands to reason that if Warner Bros. is bringing the movies home for us, we need to do more than just sit on our sofas and watch. We owe it to Hollywood studios to find ways to replicate the entire moviegoing experience, at least until it's safe to return to theaters.

Calling it a "unique one-year plan," Warner Bros. officials said new films will premiere in theaters and on HBO Max at the same time. After a month, the streaming will stop and the movies will only play in theaters.

Ann Sarnoff, chief executive of WarnerMedia Studio, said in a statement: "No one wants films back on the big screen more than we do. We know new content is the lifeblood of theatrical exhibition, but we have to balance this with the reality that most theaters in the U.S. will likely operate at reduced capacity throughout 2021."

That means it's up to us, the heroes, to preserve the movie theater lifestyle.

Don't worry, I have a plan. And like all great American plans, it begins with butter.

I propose the federal government, beginning Jan. 1, issue each American family one Paragon 2027B Pro-Deluxe 3 Qt. Butter Warmer with Spout. (I know, some will say the KaTom Gold Medal 2496 Counter Model BIB Butter Dispenser with 35 lb. Bag In A Box Capacity is a superior butter machine, but cost-wise, the Paragon is a safer bet for a government program.)

A machine that dispenses a warm liquid that tastes like butter and also works to lubricate a cruise ship's propeller shafts is a good first step. That will guarantee our home popcorn meets all movie theater standards of lethality. But we can't rely on the government for everything.

The rest is up to us.

—Sticky floors: Soda, half-eaten candy and, if available, a small amount of liquid cheese must be spilled on the floor of any movie-viewing room. It's important not to distribute the sticky substances evenly. You want to be able to take a few steps and only notice a thin layer of stickiness before stepping on a spot that effectively cements your foot to the ground. If possible, roll a couple hot dogs across the floor. The grease will add intermittent slipperiness to the floor, creating that wonderful "walking in a movie theater" rhythm: sticky step, sticky step, STUCK!, sticky step, SLIP!, sticky step, STUCK!

—Minimum caloric intake: No person streaming a Warner Bros. movie at home is allowed to walk away from the movie without consuming at least 45,000 calories. (The government-issued butter warmer with spout will help with this, but supplemental Goobers or Reese's Pieces will likely be necessary.)

—That Guy: Prior to streaming a new blockbuster, each family must pick one person who will be "That Guy." The designated That Guy is responsible for sitting in front of you when there are plenty of other perfectly good seats available. If your family contains any tallish teenagers, they will make excellent That Guys, as they will also fulfill the next requirement.

—Person using a phone the whole darn time: Key to the simulated movie theater experience is at least one person who is on his or her phone throughout the movie, either texting with the phone's brightness too high or having a whispered conversation with someone. Again, teens are a great choice for this role as that's what they'll be doing anyway.

—Loud commentary deliverer: Aside from the butterlike substance, this is arguably the most important element of the homebound theatrical experience. And thanks to Zoom and other video conferencing platforms, it's easy to achieve. You want to set up a laptop or tablet and put it on a chair facing the television. Then have a random person join you via Zoom to watch the movie. That person's job is to regularly and loudly interject with comments like: "Oh my God, why is he doing that?!?"; "I would NOT go in there!"; "This part coming up is SO FUNNY, you'll love it!"; and "WAIT, WHAT JUST HAPPENED??"

—No pausing: Finally, to cap off the event, there has to be a strict rule that once a movie begins streaming, it can't be paused. If you have to pee, you can't go unless you want to miss part of the movie. You won't want to miss part of the movie, so you'll hold it until you're about to begin streaming, at which point you'll run across the sticky floor only to find the bathroom is occupied by That Guy.

I know this plan sounds onerous, but it's important we follow all the steps. They'll prepare us for that fine day when we, and That Guy, can safely return to movie theaters and more comfortably risk bladder infections while consuming propeller-shaft grease with our feet stuck to the floor.

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Why it's time to retire the term 'Asian Pacific Islander'

By NAOMI ISHISAKA
The Seattle Times

Naomi Ishisaka is a columnist for The Seattle Times.

Sometimes in the march to progress and inclusivity, we find ourselves taking a path that leads us in the opposite direction than what we intended.

Such is the case with the term "Asian Pacific Islander" or API, a now commonly used way to describe people of Asian American and Pacific Islander descent in the United States. An even more shorthanded version is Asian Pacific American, or APA.

There are now API and APA organizations, scholarships, grants, academic disciplines, a national Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and in Washington state, a Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

The original term, Asian American, came out of the pan-Asian student movement of the late 1960s, as part of an effort to unify what had been disparate Asian American groups into an umbrella that acknowledged a shared history, identity and reject the antiquated and geographically subjective term "Oriental."

By the 1980s, the U.S. Census expanded the definition, presumably to be more inclusive, grouping Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders together into the category of Asian Pacific Islander. By 1997, the federal Office of Management and Budget changed back to allow different categories for "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander," but the umbrella API and APA terms have stuck.

Now, some Pacific Islander, also known as Pasifika, community leaders say it's time to disaggregate Pacific Islander from Asian Americans and take the "P" back to speak truth to the reality of the Pacific Islander experience.

Pacific Islander or Pasifika people are those originating or living in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. Pacific Islander communities face significant health and socioeconomic disparities compared to other groups. In most measures, such as poverty rates and health outcomes, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) people fall behind white Americans as well as behind Asian Americans. Nowhere are those disparities more evident than with COVID-19.

In Washington, the state with the third highest number of NHPI in the country, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have a seven times higher rate of COVID-19 cases than white and Asian American people.

Joseph Seia, the founder and executive director of the Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington, said merging Asian American and NHPI together makes the specific needs of NHPI people invisible.

Seia said the experience of NHPI people is actually much more akin to the experience of urban Native American people, as the majority of NHPI are also indigenous to their original lands and suffered displacement, dislocation and subjugation due to colonization—including colonization and oppression by Asian countries.

Nuclear weapons testing on Pacific islands like the Marshall Islands, for example, left residents with radiation sickness and a multitude of cancers. And in Samoa, a rapid shift from a traditional diet and lifestyle brought on by colonization created an astronomical rise in diabetes beginning after World War II, with nearly a third of the population now having the disease. The experience of NHPI is also similar to Native Americans in that small numbers (under 1% NHPI in Washington, for example) makes it easier for NHPI to be overlooked.

"I think we just have to stop using the racist term (Asian American Pacific Islander). I think we have to just bury that term. For a lot of Asian organizations, drop the 'P,'" Seia said.

Unless the organization is actually centering the work, needs and leadership of NHPI people, they should make way for NHPI-led organizations that are. To not do so, Seia said, leaves NHPI people without advocates at policy tables where critical decisions are being made that impact the health of their communities.

Dakota Camacho is a Seattle-based Chamorro artist whose family is from Guahan, also known as Guam. Camacho said that not only does lumping Asian Americans and NHPI together not make any political sense, but the erasure of NHPI does a disservice in other ways as well.

"It also means that we get left out. That is a problem because we matter and because we have ancestral intelligence and knowledge and language and culture that is beautiful. We have so much to offer to the world that can enrich people's lives," Camacho said.

Retaining a sense of cultural pride and self determination in the face of colonization is a victory in itself.

"To live through a moment where your grandparents were made to believe their whole life by different foreign occupations that our people are dumb, that our cultures are useless, that our language has no value," Camacho said, "you begin to internalize that those things are true about you."

It's part of Camacho's mission to use Pasifika art and culture to resist that mental colonization.

"Our indigenous knowledge is essential to the survival of all of us," Camacho said. "Indigenous culture is really just a set of practices, beliefs, and values that our ancestors have honed over time to orient us towards having a healthy and holistic relationship to the environment, to ourselves, to our community and to all life on this planet, the seen and the unseen, the big spirits in the mountains, the elements."

Camacho has a simple remedy for the disaggregation problem. "Just be Asian," Camacho said. "(If you focus on Asian Americans), just be Asian." Don't claim to represent NHPI communities if it is not actually authentic to the work you do or the communities you center. Then, support NHPI-led organizations and efforts and ensure they have their own, independent seat at the table.

Making that change will help us all get back on a more inclusive path.

CONGRESS

From Page 8

deaths reach 9/11 levels on a daily basis and small businesses go under (while the White House hands out criminal pardons like Christmas candy) can't be a good look for an elected official from any political stripe.

Case in point: Just in Baltimore this week there are signs of more failing restaurants, an industry especially hard it by the pandemic and limits of indoor dining and hours. Aldo's in Little Italy recently chose to suspend indoor dining as a 25% capacity limit proved too daunting. Meanwhile, landmark restaurants from nearby Roy's in Harbor East to the Milton Inn in Sparks are gone permanently. Federal Reserve Chairman Jay Powell has been warning anyone who will listen that the economic outlook remains "extraordinarily uncertain." Is Congress deaf?

McConnell may not be ready to go centrist in the manner of Gov. Hogan, but he and his fellow GOP senators can surely see advantage in giving compromise a chance at least once, not to mention help states run by Republican governors. Walk away from this bipartisan measure and the Biden administration can rightfully claim that Republicans remain the party of the rich despite all that populist rhetoric of the last four years. That doesn't seem like a winning message in 2022 anymore than it does in 2020. Americans have seen what Congress can do when it's properly motivated as it was when it passed the CARES Act in March. Another economic shot in the arm is just what the doctor ordered.

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An urgently needed pivot to end COVID and cure lockdowns

By MARIE FISHPAW and PAUL WINFREE
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

With COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths climbing, policymakers understandably want a response that protects lives and livelihoods. Many have resorted to an old playbook of blunt mandates, including late-night curfews, travel restrictions, as well as school and business closures. And while we wait at home, our leaders have pinned hopes on a vaccine that remains months away from being widely available.

Unfortunately, these are public health tools predicated on the assumption that it is impossible to know who has the virus. Therefore, we must treat everyone as infected.

However, this doesn't need to be the way. The technology exists to equip everyone with knowledge of their COVID-positive status using self-administered rapid tests. In fact, the Trump administration recently purchased 150 million rapid tests to distribute to those most in need.

But this is nowhere near enough to collapse the outbreak's spread. That would take, according to Harvard epidemiologist Dr. Michael Mina, half the population testing themselves with a rapid test every four days.

That requires more tests—a lot more—to transform the response to the virus. Paul Romer, a Nobel laureate in economics, argues we need to test 50 million people per day, an investment he estimates could cost of $45 billion over the course of three months. This is a snowflake in a storm compared to what has been spent to date in the response and the lives lost already.

Such a model would follow that being used by the NFL, which administers tests to players and other essential employees daily and requires a negative test before entering a NFL facility, along with other mitigation measures including social distancing.

This approach would also meet Americans where they are: fatigued from both the virus and the response and resistant to additional mandates. It would empower us to know our own status and be reasonably sure others know theirs. Massive distribution of rapid self-tests for use in homes, schools, offices and other public places would replace ignorance with knowledge.

What's in the way? Regulatory barriers, direct funding and leadership.

Realizing the promise of these tests must begin with the Department of Health and Human Services adjusting its regulatory posture. For example, one of the cheapest, most effective rapid tests—delivering results for $5 in 15 minutes—can give results at home, but HHS hasn't cleared it for home use—not even under the supervision of a medical provider via telehealth. Instead, users have to mail it into a lab, when what's needed to keep pace with the disease are tests with near-instant results that can be done by anyone. This restriction could be understandable if the test is difficult to perform, but it's not.

Additionally, Congress should immediately provide resources that would commit HHS to prepurchasing rapid tests over the next two years. Even if a vaccine is quickly produced and distributed, it is unlikely to reach healthy populations until 2022. During that time, additional rapid testing will be needed to ensure that the virus is contained and that schools and businesses can safely open and remain open.

And while testing capacity is ramping up, the CDC needs to provide better, clear guidance about who should get tested when. The CDC's guidance remains conflicting and contradictory, with different web pages recommending different things.

Joe Biden has called for implementing widespread testing; Donald Trump should join him in that call. We have no time to waste. As we have entered a season of rising cases, we have already reached unprecedented caseload levels. Policies currently in place leave us no way to determine, on a rapid and widespread basis, who may have the infection and may be spreading it to others. And in response, people are either increasingly resistant to being told what to do and taking no precautions, or returning to their bunkers to wait.

These are times that require our leaders to ask hard questions, make difficult choices and pivot quickly as new tools become available and new information comes in. It's time for our leaders to look seriously at ramping up access to rapid self-testing, and do what it takes to advance it.

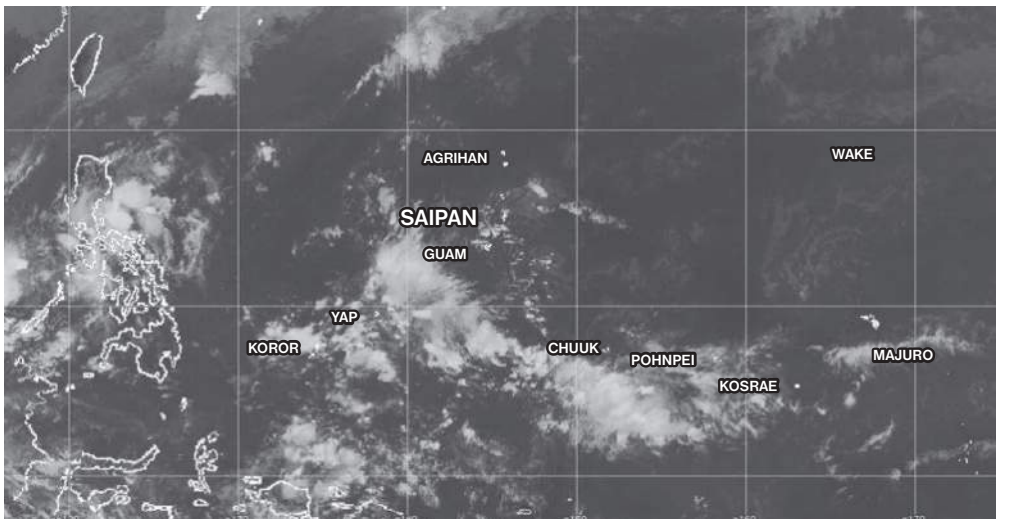
Marie Fishpaw is The Heritage Foundation's director of Domestic Policy Studies. Paul Winfree is the think tank's director of Economic Policy Studies.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:23 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show a few clouds and isolated showers across the area. Farther east, closer to 150E, a few bursts of deeper convection are evident within a trade-wind disturbance with some lightning being detected. CIMSS MIMIC precipitable water data agreed well with last night`s sounding of about 1.8 inches, and since then, drier air has moved in over the islands. However, the CIMSS imagery shows deeper moisture associated with the trade disturbance. Buoys show seas between 4 and 7 feet with altimetry data showing seas between 7 and 9 feet farther east.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Wednesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Thursday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:33 AM	5:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:40 PM	-
Wednesday	12:47 AM	1:22 PM	-
Thursday	1:43 AM	2:05 PM	-
Friday	2:40 AM	2:49 PM	-
Saturday	3:40 AM	3:36 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 27°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	68° / 59°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 70°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 50°
Manila	Rain	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 54°
Miami	Thunderstorms	80° / 65°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Paris	Showers	41° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°
Rome	Rain	59° / 46°
Salem	Showers	41° / 28°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 45°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 34°
Tokyo	Sunny	48° / 34°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	43° / 33°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
7:08 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.04
2:32 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.77
9:01 PM	LOW TIDE	0.83
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Music Bank plays notes on taste buds

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Music Bank Restaurant in San Jose started as a karaoke joint before the owner transitioned to the food industry in 2010.

Owner Sunho Jacob Kang said karaoke used to be a big thing on Saipan, but things have changed, which is why they transformed their little karaoke joint into a Korean restaurant 10 years ago.

"This place was Music Bank Karaoke before, but we changed it into a restaurant," he said, and since the name "Music Bank" already has a lot of recall on island he decided to keep that and just switch "karaoke" with "restaurant" in the name.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Music Bank Restaurant is also offering 15% off on its Korean barbecue menu.

Nowadays, Kang said Music Bank Restaurant serves traditional Korean food and is quite known for their Korean barbecue and three kinds of bibimbap and healthy soup.

For reservations and for more information, call 235-7726.

"We keep making health food. For example, our basic soup dish calls for boiling original seafood with dried pollack head and onion and dried seed and other ingredients," he said.

MARK RABAGO
Music Bank Restaurant is located at the back of San Jose Mart in Oleai.

Currently, Music Bank Restaurant is offering 15% off on its Korean barbecue menu. For instance, beef ribs is now only $21.25 from $25, marinated grilled beef rib is now only $19.50 from $23, and beef brisket in now only $15.30 from $18.

For a limited time only, they are also giving away a free roll of toilet paper for everyone who dines at the restaurant. They are also giving 10% off on to-go orders.

Kang also said that they were forced to close their business due to COVID-19 concerns in March. "We never closed before. …We had such a bad time when COVID-19 first started on the island."

As far as following the guidelines of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, he said Music Bank Restaurant strictly adheres to them as well as the advice of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to practice social distancing, hand wash and use hand sanitizers frequently, and the wearing of face masks.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Music Bank Restaurant's fish roe soup.

Music Bank Restaurant is located at the back of San Jose Mart in Oleai. It is open from 11am to 2pm for lunch and 5pm to 9pm at dinner. For reservations and for more information, call 235-7726.

IT&E, IP&E launch new loyalty program, PACIFICPOINTS

TAMUNING, Guam—IT&E and IP&E announced last Friday's official launch of PACIFICPOINTS, a new loyalty program that awards points that can be redeemed for vouchers for purchases at IT&E, Shell and Foody's Guam or converted to United MileagePlus.

PACIFICPOINTS gives customers more options to accumulate points from day-today activities like paying IT&E bills, fueling up at Shell and shopping at Foody's Guam.

To celebrate the official launch, the first 3,000 members to use their PACIFICPOINTS membership during any transaction at Shell, IT&E, and Foody's will get 100 Bonus Points.

Aside from this, there are a lot of exciting promotions lined up for IT&E and IP&E customers! All members who purchase V-Power Fuel at any Shell in Guam and on Saipan will receive Double PACIFICPOINTS until Jan. 31, 2021. Also, they can earn 500 bonus points at IT&E when they purchase select phones, including the new Samsung Note20 series and other Samsung and Apple devices, on a 12- or 24-month contract; or activate a Device Payment Plan or Bring Your Phone plan on a 12- or 24-month contract.

For a limited time, all Shell Lucky 7 customers will be able to transfer their Lucky 7 Points to PACIFICPOINTS. Customers can do this by emailing their PACIFICPOINTS registered ID and Lucky 7 number to lucky7@ipehq.com by Dec. 31, 2020.

"We are excited to provide additional value to our subscribers. PACIFICPOINTS is replacing our previous rewards program and will give our subscribers the ability to earn more points in more ways and redeem more rewards. This is one of the many ways we show our appreciation for our subscribers and their continued loyalty," said Jim Oehlerking, CEO of IT&E.

"We understand that customers can choose where and how they spend their hard-earned dollars. For many years, our customers earned great rewards with our Lucky 7 Loyalty Program. With our partnership offers in PACIFICPOINTS, those rewards are better and the value greater. Customers earn rewards with fuel purchases at Shell, convenience items at Foody's and bill payments at IT&E. This is a great way for customers to stack up on savings while spending on everyday essentials. The convenient mobile app enables customers to see how much they are earning and customize their rewards to work best for their personal needs," said Brian Bamba, managing director, IP&E.

Key features of the new loyalty program include:

■ **Free Membership** - No need to pay to unlock rewards.

■ **Earn Points Easily**

■ Earn points every month at IT&E when you pay your bill. Earn 2 points for every dollar on a wireless plan on a 12- or 24-month agreement; 1 point for every dollar on a month-to-month wireless plan; 2 points for every dollar on a 3-Service Internet Bundle (CNMI only); and 1 point for every dollar on a 2-Service Internet Bundle (CNMI only).

■ Earn 1 point for every $1 spent at all Shell Stations (Guam and CNMI) and Foody's Branches (Guam).

■ Exciting promotions allow members to earn more points

■ Be upgraded to elite tiers for more privileges.

■ **Redeem Points Faster** - Exchange points for discounts, vouchers and more.

■ **Points as Good as Cash** - Use PACIFICPOINTS to pay for your purchase.

■ **A Lifetime of Points** - Points do not expire when you earn or redeem at least once a year.

Early registration for PACIFICPOINTS began on October 23, 2020 for customers enrolled in IT&E's previous loyalty program and IP&E's Lucky 7 program.

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Senator says Trump, McConnell likely to back COVID-19 relief

WASHINGTON (AP)—A proposed COVID-19 relief bill is expected to get backing from President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell but it won't include $1,200 in direct payments to most Americans, a Republican senator involved in the bipartisan talks says.

"President Trump has indicated that he would sign a $908 billion package — there's only one $908 billion package out there and it's ours," Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said Sunday. "The pain of the American people is driving this, and I'm optimistic that both those leaders will come on board."

With time running out, lawmakers from both parties were closing in on the final language that would provide roughly $300 in extra federal weekly unemployment benefits, leaving the issue of cash payments for President-elect Joe Biden to wrestle over with a new Congress next year.

The package to be released Monday would be attached to a larger year-end spending bill needed to avert a government shutdown this coming weekend.

The direct payments were popular when they were first distributed after the pandemic hit, and Biden on Friday had expressed hope that a second wave might come after weekend negotiations.

But senators involved in the talks said the checks won't be included as part of the compromise, even as Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and others said that could cause them to oppose the measure.

Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the second-ranking Democrat, indicated that excluding the checks while assuring small-business aid and renters' assistance was the only way to reach agreement with Republicans who are putting firm limits on the bill's final price tag.

"The $1,200 check, it cost we believe nationally $300 billion, to give you an idea," he said. "The Democrats have always wanted a larger number, but we were told we couldn't get anything through the Republicans, except this $900 billion level."

The plan being worked on by a group of Republican and Democratic senators is less than half of the Democrats' push of $2.2 trillion and nearly double the $500 billion "targeted" package proposed by McConnell, R-Ky.

Cassidy agreed that a new round of direct checks "may be a go" at some point. "This is not a stimulus bill, it's a relief bill," he said. "And it's something for the next three to four months to help those in greatest need."

The proposal is expected to include the $300 per week in bonus federal unemployment payments, providing relief just as emergency aid payments at regular benefit levels are set to expire at year's end. It would extend a freeze on evictions for people who cannot pay their rent and reauthorize the Paycheck Protection Program to give a second round of subsidies to businesses struggling through the pandemic.

Nation

Biden picks Calif. AG Becerra to lead HHS, pandemic response

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Joe Biden has picked California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be his health secretary, putting a defender of the Affordable Care Act in a leading role to oversee his administration's coronavirus response.

If confirmed by the Senate, Becerra, 62, will be the first Latino to head the Department of Health and Human Services, a $1-trillion-plus agency with 80,000 employees and a portfolio that includes drugs and vaccines, leading-edge medical research and health insurance programs covering more than 130 million Americans.

As California's attorney general, Becerra has led the coalition of Democratic states defending "Obamacare" from the Trump administration's latest effort to overturn it, a legal case awaiting a Supreme Court decision next year.

A former senior House Democrat, Becerra played a role in steering the Obama health law through Congress in 2009 and 2010. At the time he would tell reporters that one of the primary motivations for him was having tens of thousands of uninsured people in his Southern California district.

Overseeing the coronavirus response will be the most complicated task Becerra has ever contemplated. By next year, the U.S. will be engaged in a mass vaccination campaign, the groundwork for which has been laid under the Trump administration. Although the vaccines appear very promising, and no effort has been spared to plan for their distribution, it's impossible to tell yet how well things will go when it's time to get shots in the arms of millions of Americans.

The core components of HHS are the boots on the ground of the government's coronavirus response. The Food and Drug Administration oversees vaccines and treatments, while much of the underlying scientific and medical research comes from NIH. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention takes the lead in detecting and containing the spread of diseases. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provides insurance coverage for more than 1 in 3 Americans, including vulnerable seniors, as well as many children and low-income people.

Under President Donald Trump, CDC was relegated to a lesser role after agency scientists issued a stark early warning that contradicted Trump's assurances the virus was under control, rattling financial markets. The FDA was the target of repeated attacks from a president who suspected its scientists were politically motivated and who also wanted them to rubber-stamp unproven treatments.

In this Dec. 4, 2019, file photo, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra speaks during a news conference in Sacramento, Calif. AP

As California's attorney general, Becerra jokingly became known in Democratic legal circles as the man who sued Trump more than anyone else. Beyond health care, the lawsuits centered on issues from immigration to environmental policies.

Before he became California's attorney general, Becerra had served for more than a decade in Congress, representing parts of Los Angeles County. He had also served in the California state assembly after attending law school at Stanford.

His mother was born in Jalisco, Mexico, and emigrated to the U.S. after marrying his father.

In Georgia, Loeffler again refuses to say Trump lost

ATLANTA (AP)—Sen. Kelly Loeffler three times refused to acknowledge that President Donald Trump lost re-election in November, as she debated her Democratic opponent, Rev. Raphael Warnock, in a closely watched runoff election.

Asked specifically about President-elect Joe Biden's victory in Georgia and whether she agreed with Trump's unfounded accusations of widespread voter fraud, Loeffler sidestepped the matter. "The president has every right to every legal recourse, and that's what's taking place," Loeffler said.

Her Democratic opponent Warnock blasted the senator for "casting doubt" on a legitimate election.

However, Loeffler, again and again, tacitly admitted Trump's defeat by casting twin Jan. 5 runoffs as necessary to prevent a leftward march toward socialism. "Everything is at stake in this election, the future of our country," she said, alluding to the high-stakes battle for control of the Senate.

The battle between Loeffler and Warnock and a second runoff between Republican Sen. David Perdue with Democrat Jon Ossoff will determine which party controls the Senate at the outset of Biden's presidency. Republicans need one seat for a majority. Democrats need a sweep to make Vice President-elect Kamala Harris the tie-breaking vote.

The debate came a day after Trump was in Georgia for a Valdosta rally alongside the two Republican senators. The president repeated his baseless claims that Biden's victory in Georgia and nationally were due to fraud.

In an earlier session Sunday, Ossoff debated an empty podium, hammering Perdue as a "coward" for skipping the debate.

Ossoff suggested Perdue, the first-term Republican whose prolific stock trading has drawn attention during the COVID-19 pandemic, left his podium vacant because he didn't want to "incriminate himself" over his personal financial activities that the challenger summed up as "cartoonish abuse of power."

Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani tests positive for COVID

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump said Sunday his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani has tested positive for the coronavirus, making him the latest in Trump's inner circle to contract the disease that is now surging across the U.S.

Giuliani was admitted Sunday to Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The 76-year-old former New York mayor has traveled extensively to battleground states in an effort to help Trump subvert his election loss. On numerous occasions he has met with officials for hours at a time without wearing a mask.

Trump, who confirmed Giuliani's positive test in a Sunday afternoon tweet, wished him a speedy recovery.

"Get better soon Rudy, we will carry on!!!" Trump wrote.

Giuliani did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but on Sunday evening he retweeted Trump's announcement of his diagnosis. He also tweeted thanks to a conservative writer who had said he was praying for Giuliani.

It was not clear what, if any, symptoms Giuliani was experiencing.

Giuliani attended a hearing at the Georgia Capitol on Thursday where he went without a mask for several hours. Several state senators, all Republicans, also did not wear masks at the hearing.

On Wednesday night, Giuliani was in Lansing, Michigan, to testify in a highly unusual 4 1/2-hour legislative hearing in which he pushed Republican lawmakers to ignore the certification of Joe Biden's Michigan victory and appoint electors for Trump. He did not wear a mask, nor did lawyer Jenna Ellis, who was sitting next to him. At one point, he asked one of his witnesses—a Detroit election worker—if she would be comfortable removing her mask. But legislators said they could hear her.

He also appeared maskless at a Nov. 25 hearing in Pennsylvania. And Giuliani did not quarantine after being near an infected person at a Nov. 19 news conference at the Republican National Committee's headquarters. His son Andrew Giuliani, who is a White House aide, announced a day after the event that he had tested positive for the virus.

Research shows that people who contract the virus may become infectious to others several days before they start to feel ill.

Georgia state Sen. Jen Jordan, a Democrat who attended Thursday's hearing, expressed outrage after learning of Giuliani's diagnosis.

"Little did I know that most credible death threat that I encountered last week was Trump's own lawyer," Jordan tweeted. "Giuliani—maskless, in packed hearing room for 7 hours. To say I am livid would be too kind."

Before the hearing, Giuliani and Michigan Republican Party Chairman Laura Cox—both maskless—did a virtual briefing for GOP activists.

Giuliani made an appearance earlier Sunday on Fox News "Sunday Morning Futures" to speak about his legal challenges in several states on behalf of Trump.

The diagnosis comes more than a month after Trump lost reelection and more than two months after Trump himself was stricken with the virus in early October. Since then, a flurry of administration officials and others in Trump's orbit have also been sickened, including White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and Ben Carson, the secretary of housing and urban development. The president's wife, Melania Trump, and teenage son, Barron Trump, have also been stricken.

The extraordinary spread in Trump's orbit underscores the cavalier approach the president has taken to a virus that has now killed more than 280,000 people in the U.S. alone.

Those infected also include the White House press secretary and advisers Hope Hicks and Stephen Miller, as well as Trump's campaign manager and the chair of the Republican National Committee.

Trump spent the waning days of his campaign trying to persuade the American public that the virus was receding, and repeatedly claimed it would miraculously "disappear" after Nov. 3. Instead, the country is experiencing a record-breaking spike in infections.

The president gave the mounting coronavirus death toll scant attention at a Saturday evening rally in Valdosta, Georgia, where he campaigned on behalf of Republican Sens. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue ahead of next month's runoff election there. Most people who attended the outdoor rally did not wear masks.

Asia

China prepares large-scale rollout of COVID vaccines

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Provincial governments across China are placing orders for experimental, domestically made coronavirus vaccines, though health officials have yet to say how well they work or how they may reach the country's 1.4 billion people.

Developers are speeding up final testing, the Chinese foreign minister said during a U.N. meeting last week, as Britain approved emergency use of Pfizer Inc.'s vaccine candidate and providers scrambled to set up distribution.

Even without final approval, more than 1 million health care workers and others in China who are deemed at high risk of infection have received experimental vaccines under emergency use permission. There has been no word on possible side effects.

China's fledgling pharmaceutical industry has at least five vaccines from four producers being tested in more than a dozen countries including Russia, Egypt and Mexico. Health experts say even if they are successful, the certification process for the United States, Europe, Japan and other developed countries might be too complex for them to be used there. However, China said it will ensure the products are affordable for developing countries.

AP

Commuters wearing face masks to help curb the spread of the coronavirus wait for buses at a bus stand in Beijing, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020.

One developer, China National Pharmaceutical Group, known as Sinopharm, said in November it applied for final market approval for use of its vaccine in China. Others have been approved for emergency use on people deemed at high risk of infection.

"We must be prepared for large-scale production," said Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, who has overseen much of the country's response, during a visit Wednesday to developers, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Sun visited one of Sinopharm's Beijing subsidiary companies; another producer, Sinovac, and a research lab under the National Medical Products Administration, a regulatory agency that approves medical products for public use.

The government has yet to say how many people it plans to vaccinate. Sun said plans call for vaccinating border personnel and other high-risk populations this month.

The companies are using more traditional techniques than Western developers.

They say unlike Pfizer's vaccine, which must be kept frozen at temperatures as low as minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit), theirs can be stored at 2 to 8 C (36 to 46 F). The Chinese producers have yet to say how they might be distributed.

Indonesia minister turns himself in for COVID-19 aid graft

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's anti-corruption commission formally detained the country's social affairs minister after he surrendered to authorities Sunday to face charges of taking bribes related to the government's COVID-19 aid distribution.

Social Affairs Minister Juliari Batubara turned himself in to the Corruption Eradication Commission hours after the commission's chairman, Firli Bahuri, called on him to surrender at a news conference at around midnight Saturday.

Batubara, who is also a member of the ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, made no comment when arriving at the commission's headquarters in the capital, Jakarta.

The anti-corruption commission, known by its acronym KPK, said Batubara is accused of receiving at least 17 billion rupiah ($1.2 million) from two supplier companies through his two subordinates, who were also named as suspects.

Bahuri said the suppliers were asked to set aside 70 cents for each package of basic food distributed to the poor for Batubara's benefit.

His arrest came a day after KPK foiled an attempt to hand over seven suitcases and backpacks containing $1.3 million in cash to ministry officials.

"We will not stop here. We will closely watch how the government's social assistance is being procured and channeled during the COVID-19 pandemic," Bahuri said.

He said Batubara could face up to life in prison if found guilty of stealing public money.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said he has warned his Cabinet ministers against corruption.

"I repeatedly remind all state officials to be careful in using the state budget ... that's people's money," Widodo said in a televised address hours after the commission formally named Batubara as a suspect. "I will not protect those involved in corruption."

Batubara is the second Cabinet member arrested for graft in less than two weeks. Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Edhy Prabowo, who has since resigned, was also arrested on suspicion of taking bribes in connection with exports of lobster larvae, and allegedly used the money for a luxury shopping spree in the United States.

The cases could further tarnish Widodo's credibility in fighting corruption. Two other Cabinet ministers, including Batubara's predecessor, have been sentenced to prison terms in corruption cases.

Widodo campaigned in part on a pledge to run a clean government in a country that ranked 85th out of 180 nations in the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by Transparency International.

Indonesia has reported more than 570,000 cases of the coronavirus, the largest tally in Southeast Asia and second in Asia only to India's 9.6 million cases.

World

Venezuela vote likely to give Congress to Maduro's party

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuela's congressional election on Sunday will almost certainly give President Nicolás Maduro control over the country's last major independent institution, but will do little to improve his image at home and abroad.

Maduro, who already has the loyalty of the courts, the military, prosecutors and other institutions, seeks to load the National Assembly with members of his United Socialist Party of Venezuela. Critics say he's guaranteed that by rigging the system to smother the last remnants of democracy in Venezuela.

An opposition coalition led by U.S.-backed politician Juan Guaidó is boycotting the vote. The European Union, the U.S. and several other nations have already declared the vote a sham.

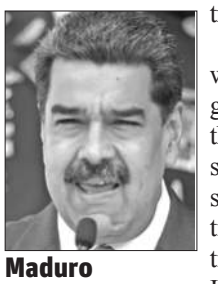
"How's Maduro's fraud going?" Guaidó tweeted, showing pictures of an empty polling place. "Failed."

Despite Venezuela's political turmoil, voting took place with no apparent problems in Caracas, where polling places were operated by civilian militia members and armed soldiers alongside election workers.

A light flow of voters walked up to ballot boxes at Andres Bello School in downtown Caracas. They checked their names on a wall outside, and inside showed identification cards before registering their votes on touchscreen machines, which printed a paper ballot they dropped into a box.

"I came to vote, and in less than half a second I have voted, quickly," Caracas resident Rafael Espinoza said. "I'll tell anyone who wants to do so that they can come down and vote in fractions of a second."

The Supreme Court this year appointed a new elections commission, including three members who have been sanctioned by the U.S. and Canada, without participation of the opposition-led Congress, as the law requires.



Maduro

The court also removed the leadership of three opposition parties, appointing new leaders the opposition accuses of conspiring to support Maduro.

Maduro has campaigned for his party's candidates—including his son and wife—promising to finally silence the right-wing opposition, which he accuses of inciting violent protests and inviting U.S. sanctions.

"There are those who plot coups, those who ask for military intervention," Maduro said on Saturday night in a broadcast on state television, dismissing criticism of the election. "We say: Votes yes -- war no, bullets no."

The election comes amid uncertainty over the impending change of U.S. administration. Like outgoing President Donald Trump, President-elect Joe Biden has called Maduro a "dictator," though it's unclear what approach he'll take toward Venezuela's crisis.

Guaidó's opposition movement is holding its own referendum over several days immediately after the election. It will ask Venezuelans whether they want to end Maduro's rule and hold new presidential elections.

Polls indicate that neither Maduro nor Guaidó are popular among Venezuelans at a time the nation's economic and political crisis is deepening despite having the world's largest oil reserves.

Karol Teran, a nurse and single mother on her way to work in Caracas, said she didn't vote because it would have no impact. The election is controlled, she said.

"I don't feel like wasting my time, giving these people the opportunity, so I simply don't vote," she said. "We're tired of all this. I'm tired of all of this. It's not easy."

She was still considering whether to participate in the opposition's referendum.

More than 5 million people have fled the country in recent years, the world's largest migration after that of war-torn Syria. The International Monetary Fund projects a 25% decline this year in Venezuela's GDP, while hyperinflation diminishes the value of its currency, the bolivar, now worth less than a millionth of a dollar on the free market.

Maduro, the hand-picked successor to the late President Hugo Chávez, won a second term in 2018. But his political adversaries and scores of nations, including the U.S., reject his legitimacy, alleging the vote was rigged and his most popular challengers were banned.

Guaidó, 37, vowed to oust 58-year-old Maduro early last year—basing his claim to the interim presidency on his leadership of the National Assembly, whose term legally ends in early January under the constitution.

The Trump administration and other countries led support of Guaidó and have said they will continue to support him in the absence of what they consider fair elections.

Washington has hit Maduro and his political allies with sanctions, and the U.S. Justice Department has indicted Maduro as a "narco-terrorist," offering a $15 million reward for his arrest.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Sunday's election was fraudulent.

Pope: Christmas a sign of hope amid difficulties of pandemic

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis says the Christmas season provides reason for hope amid the difficulties of the coronavirus pandemic.

During his Sunday blessing, Francis noted that the Vatican's Christmas tree had gone up last week in St. Peter's Square, and that work is underway to build the life-size Nativity scene next to it.

Pointing to the tree from his studio window over the square, Francis said such symbols of Christmas "are signs of hope, especially in this difficult period."

He urged the faithful to recall the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus—and lend a hand to the neediest. He said: "There's no pandemic, there's no crisis that can extinguish this light."

The Vatican hasn't released the pope's Christmas schedule, but he usually celebrates a Christmas Eve Mass and then offers a blessing on Christmas Day. The Vatican's liturgical services are being held without the general public present because of COVID-19.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW

America's bestselling minivan, the Honda Odyssey, retains its charms for 2021

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

2021 Honda Odyssey
TNS

In a time when your family's safety is paramount, the 2021 Honda Odyssey makes for soothing relief.

How else to describe a family-friendly vehicle that was the first minivan to earn the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) highest accolade, the 2020 "Top Safety Pick+" rating?

OK, that may not sound exciting to you. But to a harried parent, one less thing to worry about is always a good thing. And the Honda Odyssey provides that in spades.

For 2021, America's most popular minivan gets a mild freshening with more powerful LED lighting framing a restyled grille and front fascia, and black trim under the rear window. The rest of the vehicle's look remains unchanged, with an undulating beltline and flowing lines on the side the vehicle, capped by a partially blacked out D-pillar. What has changed is Honda Sensing, Honda's suite of driver-assistance safety systems; it's now standard equipment on all models, and includes collision mitigation braking with pedestrian detection; forward collision warning; road departure mitigation with lane departure warning; and adds lane keeping assist and adaptive cruise control.

Sold in ascending LX, EX, EX-L, Touring and Elite trim, the Odyssey's practicality remains intact, thanks to 155.7 cubic feet of cargo space and the flexibility to carry people or cargo or both. And it comes with the sort of options that make life easier, such as wireless charging, heated/ventilated seats, power sliding doors, and an integrated vacuum cleaner. All the better to clean-up wayward Cheerios or pet hair.

As before, the center row bucket seats fold as well as slide side-to-side, making third-row entry easy. And the third row folds flat into the floor, allowing for an admirable amount of cargo space. When the seats aren't folded, you'll find the existing cargo area is massive, with a low lift over that's far easier to access than any SUV. And Honda has added grocery bag hooks on the back of the third-row seats for 2021. The front bucket seats are firm, but very comfortable and perfect for long stints behind the wheel. And both have heating and ventilation on the Elite, along with fold-down center armrests. Headroom and legroom are generous.

Thoughtfully, all three rows have USB ports, map pockets, smart phone slots, cup holders, and air conditioning vents and storage nooks. The top-of-the-line Elite test vehicle had a ceiling-mounted DVD screen and wireless headphones, a boon for a bit of peace and quiet on family trips. In addition, a new rear seat reminder system alerts the driver to check their rear seating area when leaving the vehicle. It's integrated into a new CabinWatch system on Touring and Elite trim, which provides front seat view of the second and third rows, which also uses the audio system speakers or headphones to amplify front-seat passengers' voices.

The test vehicle's gloomy black interior featured fake smoked-wood trim and plenty of storage options, including a large center console, and a plethora of door pockets. A wireless charging pad was most welcome, as were a hidden auxiliary and port in the center console, and additional USB outlets, as well as 12-volt and 150-watt outlets. Thoughtfully, Honda provides the driver with buttons to open the power sliding side doors and power rear tailgate.

An eight-inch touchscreen on the instrument panel houses the infotainment functions, with Honda's cluttered, overdesigned user interface sadly remaining unchanged. The Odyssey Elite's sole option was SiriusXM satellite radio, whose pathetically abysmal sound quality makes it a dubious investment at best. In fact, its sound is so bad, you might find superior sound quality on AM transistor radio. This isn't Honda's fault, but skipping it saves you $395.

Regardless of your music preferences or which model you choose, all Odysseys come with a 280-horsepower 3.5-liter V-6 and a 10-speed automatic transmission that is up to the task of muscling this minivan down the road, although the transmission is geared for fuel economy, delaying before downshifting to deliver more power when needed. Braking is excellent, though, and steering is somewhat lightweight and devoid of road feel. Body lean is noticeable and comes on gradually. Since a minivan is not a sports car, but a device to safely and securely carry those we cherish most, the Odyssey performs remarkably well. Fuel economy came in at 23.3 mpg in mostly highway driving, besting the EPA's 22 mpg combined rating.

Nevertheless, while driving under extremely windy conditions of Tropical Storm Eta, the Odyssey's compliant suspension constantly moved, bobbed and weaved, but the Odyssey tracked straight and true. It was very impressive. As you'd expect, the Odyssey is geared for comfort and it delivers, with road intrusions well muffled; road noise is moderate, becoming very intrusive at times on bad road surfaces.

The only sour note was when the automatic emergency braking falsely slowed the vehicle down while changing lanes despite plenty of space. It was extraordinarily disconcerting, and strong enough that the vehicle could have been rear-ended if a car had been following. But that was the only real off-note in an otherwise stellar performance.

The Odyssey remains a very competitive minivan, but it faces competition from the newly refreshed Chrysler Pacifica and all-new Toyota Sienna, while an all-new Kia Sedona is coming for 2022. It remains to be seen whether any of these competitors is tough enough to steal sales away from America's best-selling minivan, a title it retains for a reason.

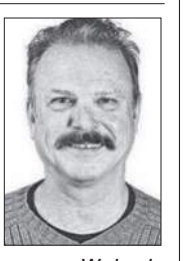
NUTS & BOLTS

2021 HONDA ODYSSEY ELITE

- **Base price:** $32,100
- **Base price, test model:** $47,820
- **Engine:** 3.5-liter SOHC V6
- **Horsepower/Torque:** 280/262
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway):** 19/28 mpg
- **Observed fuel economy:** 23.2 mpg
- **Fuel required:** Regular
- **Length/Width/Height:** 205.2/78.5/69.6 inches
- **Cargo volume:** 32.8-155.7 cubic feet
- **Towing capacity:** 3,500 pounds

Motormouth: Buy the maintenance plan?

By BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service



Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Q Purchased a new 2020 Audi A4. Salesperson wanted me to buy a maintenance plan that would cover oil changes for four years. Can my local mechanic handle the changes? Is there a reason I would need to use the dealer?

—L.S., Davie, Fla.

A Your warranty will not be voided if you chose to have oil changes, or any routine service, done by your local mechanic. You may even do the jobs yourself. All you need do is save the invoices and receipts as proof.

Q I have two direct injection vehicles. When I get down to 3/4 tank I fill up. Does this mean I always have mostly really old gas in the tanks?

—A.A., Alsip, Ill.

A You do not have mostly old gas in the tank. You are regularly freshening it with new gas. If you sip half a glass of beer and then top it off with some cold brew, the older stuff does not sit on the bottom of the glass.

Q I enjoy reading your column in the Hartford Courant. In a recent column, "B.K." of Henderson, Nevada, asked about the coolant temperature in his 2005 Corvette. You replied that water boils at 212 degrees, or 226 with a 50/50 antifreeze mixture. Those would be the boiling points at sea level pressure. Most, if not all, engines have pressurized cooling systems that allow water to reach higher temperatures than that without boiling. This is why you shouldn't remove the radiator cap from a hot engine. If any of the water in the engine is above the sea level boiling point and you release the pressure in the system, that water will immediately boil to steam and blast scalding coolant all over you.

—G.G., West Hartford, Conn.

A You are absolutely right. Are you also a mechanic?

Q I got my car in 2018 from a dealer in the San Diego area where I lived at the time. It was a "loss leader " sale. The car is in impeccable shape and I want to keep it that way. I conditioned the convertible top with a waterproof product. I'd like to know how often that is necessary. Also can you advise how I can best maintain the inner parts of the car's convertible roof such as the rubber seals? Car is garaged in the winter.

—K.G., Chicago

A I would treat the ragtop each spring when I take it out of hibernation. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun causes deterioration. Be sure your cleaner is also a UV blockers. Each fall, I suggest treating all rubber sealing parts with silicone protectant to keep them pliable.

Q I own a 2020 Subaru Forester. The trip computer tracks MPG. After I fill up the car I reset the trip computer. When I manually calculate the MPG, it is always about 2 MPG lower than that shown on the computer. I asked a friend about his Honda Civic and he has had the same experience. Is this a case of the automakers jacking us around again?

—J.T., Gurnee, Ill.

A A couple miles per gallon either was is within margin of error so I would not lose any sleep over a lost MPG or two. Do you do your manual calculation the instant the trip odometer hits zero tenths of a mile?

Life & Style

Netflix rejects calls to add disclaimer to The Crown

LONDON (AP)—Netflix has "no plans" to add a disclaimer to "The Crown" stating that its lavish drama about Britain's royal family is a work of fiction.

In a statement Saturday, Netflix said it has always presented the drama, as just that—a drama.

"We have always presented The Crown as a drama—and we have every confidence our members understand it's a work of fiction that's broadly based on historical events," it said.

"As a result we have no plans—and see no need—to add a disclaimer."

Netflix was urged last week by British Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden to add the disclaimer, in the wake of the broadcast of the drama's fourth series.

Questions of historical fidelity weren't a major issue during earlier seasons of the show, which debuted in 2016 and traces the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II, which began in 1952.

But the current fourth season is set in the 1980s, a divisive decade in Britain. Characters include Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose 11-year tenure transformed and divided Britain, and the late Princess Diana, whose death in a car crash in 1997 transfixed the nation and the world.

Some Conservatives have criticized the program's depiction of Thatcher, played by Gillian Anderson. Britain's first female prime minister, who died in 2013, is portrayed as clashing with Olivia Colman's Elizabeth to an extent that some say is exaggerated.

"The Crown" creator Peter Morgan, whose work also includes recent-history dramas "The Queen" and "Frost/Nixon," has defended his work, saying it is thoroughly researched and true in spirit.

Charles Spencer, Diana's brother, was one who called on Netflix to add a disclaimer.

"I think it would help The Crown an enormous amount if, at the beginning of each episode, it stated that, 'This isn't true but it is based around some real events,'" he told broadcaster ITV. "I worry people do think that this is gospel and that's unfair."

Niece says 'cruel and traitorous' Trump belongs in prison

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Donald Trump's niece says her uncle is "criminal, cruel and traitorous" and belongs in prison after he leaves the White House.

Mary Trump, a psychologist, author and outspoken critic of her estranged relative, rejects the notion that putting a former president on trial would deepen the nation's political divisions.

Trump

"It's quite frankly insulting to be told time after time that the American people can handle it and that we just need to move on," Mary Trump told The Associated Press in an interview this week.

"If anybody deserves to be prosecuted and tried, it's Donald," she added. "(Otherwise) we just leave ourselves open to somebody who, believe it or not, is even worse than he is."

Asked about her comments, a spokesperson for Donald Trump's presidential campaign emailed a one-sentence response: "Did she mention she has a book to sell?"

Mary Trump, the daughter of the president's elder brother, Fred Jr., announced this week she is writing a follow-up to this summer's scathing bestseller about her uncle, "Too Much and Never Enough, How My Family Created The World's Most Dangerous Man."

Her new book, "The Reckoning," from publisher St. Martin's Press won't be out until next July. It will trace what she says is America's collective trauma from its founding on the backs of enslaved Africans to the burgeoning economic and mental health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

America is "looking down the barrel of an explosion of psychological disorders" from the "trauma of living in a country in which the pandemic didn't just strike, but it was completely mishandled," Mary Trump told the AP.

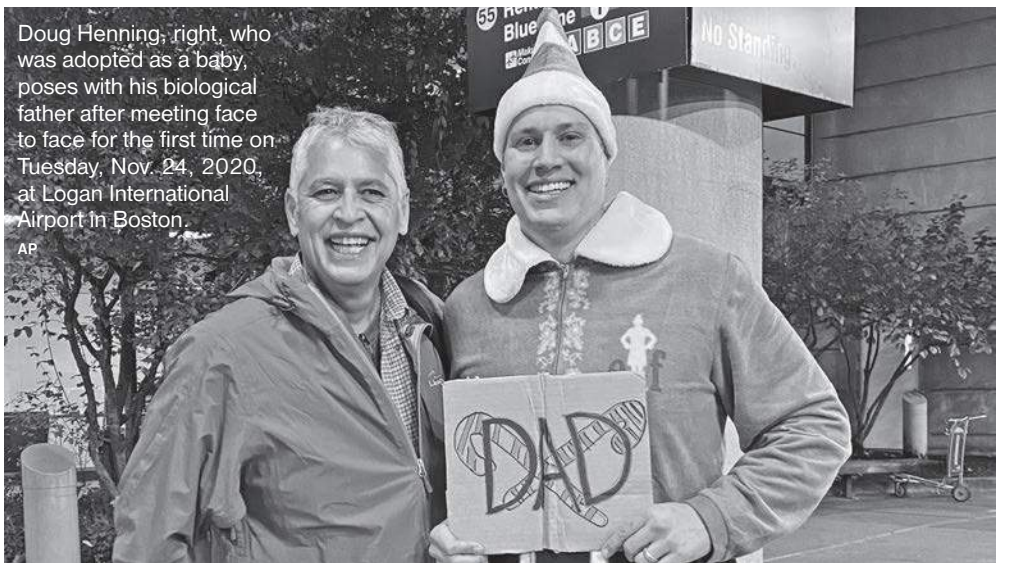
With a doctorate in clinical psychology, she argues that the U.S. needs to reimagine how it deals with mental health and mental illness, treating them with the same vigor as physical maladies.

Mary Trump's critical writings come amid legal fights with her family.

Her uncle, Robert Trump, sued to block "Too Much and Never Enough" from hitting store shelves, citing a family agreement not to publish stories about core family members without their approval, but a court rejected that.

In September, Mary Trump sued the president, Robert Trump and their sister Maryanne Trump Barry, a retired federal judge, alleging that they cheated her out of millions of dollars while squeezing her out of the family business. Robert Trump died in August and the lawsuit is pending.

When her book about the family was published in July, Trump tweeted that Mary Trump was "a seldom seen niece who knows little about me, says untruthful things about my wonderful parents (who couldn't stand her!) and me," and violated a non-disclosure agreement.


Doug Henning, right, who was adopted as a baby, poses with his biological father after meeting face to face for the first time on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020, at Logan International Airport in Boston.
AP

Scene from 'Elf' comes to life as Buddy meets dad in Boston

BOSTON (AP)—Just like a real-life movie, the story of Buddy the Elf meeting his biological father has come to life, just in time for the holidays.

Doug Henning wore a costume like the one actor Will Ferrell's character wore in "Elf" while meeting his father face to face for the first time last week at Boston's Logan Airport. He even broke into the same awkward song from the 2003 movie—sample lyrics: "I'm here, with my dad. And we never met, and he wants me to sing him a song!"

"When he came out of the airport, he probably thought I was a lunatic," Henning, 43, of Eliot, Maine, told Boston.com. "It was a really good way to break the ice."

His biological father didn't get the joke because he hadn't seen the movie, which is about a man raised at the North Pole who meets his dad for the first time. But that didn't stop him from giving his son a big hug.

Henning said he was raised by "amazing" adoptive parents but he was excited when cousins he met through ancestry.com helped to put him in touch with his biological father. Just like the movie, the father didn't know about his son.

The two met on Zoom and Henning's dad was able to fly to Boston for Thanksgiving.

Henning said he was inspired to dress as the character from "Elf" after watching the movie before the meetup. Henning said his father gained a son and became a grandfather. Henning is the first of the father's children to become a parent.

Sitter's pushy granddaughter is a concern for working mom

DEAR ABBY: Because my husband and I work, I take our 6-month-old to a sitter several times a week. I understand little ones tend to be mean sometimes—hitting, biting and pushing—but in this case, it's a little different.

My sitter cares for her 3-year-old granddaughter as well as her clients' children, and her granddaughter pushes the littler ones. I have seen her push a 1-year-old down. I have never observed any of the other children do it, only the granddaughter.

I wouldn't be so worried if my daughter were 2 and could defend herself, but she's only 6 months old. She is crawling, sitting up and standing already, and I'm gravely worried the girl will harm my infant. I don't want my baby ending up with a head injury. What can I do to try to resolve this?

DEEPLY CONCERNED IN THE SOUTH

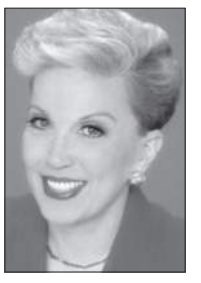
DEAR DEEPLY CONCERNED: Talk to the sitter about your concerns. Ask if it is possible to keep the older girl separate from the younger ones, however, the only way to be absolutely certain your little one is safe would be to change babysitters.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I made a friend on Facebook. "Drew" and I texted through Messenger, and I went to ride four-wheelers with him one day. We hit it off great. We started dating, and he moved in with me for a few months.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

In the beginning, Drew didn't mention he was working only part time. After he told me he had been moved to part time, I told him he needed to tell his boss he needed full time or a different job. I wrote a comment to that effect on their page, and his boss texted me back saying Drew can work as much as he wants! He also said Drew hasn't worked full time since he started working there.

Well, Drew got mad at me and left. I still love him. I thought he was my soul mate. Should I keep wishing we could get back together?

FEELING LIFELESS

DEAR FEELING LIFELESS: No! In a sense, you were taken for a ride, and I'm not talking about four-wheelers. Your next soul mate should be someone who is completely honest and, preferably, fully employed. Drew is neither.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been remarried for four years to a wonderful man who treats me like a queen. However, he and my 18-year-old daughter dislike each other, which causes a huge amount of stress and conflict. They fight, and I'm stuck in the middle. I don't know what I can do to resolve this problem. I love them both with all my heart!

DESPERATE FOR PEACE

DEAR DESPERATE: I wish you had mentioned why your husband dislikes your daughter and vice versa. Is he overbearing and trying to parent her? That is YOUR job, not his.

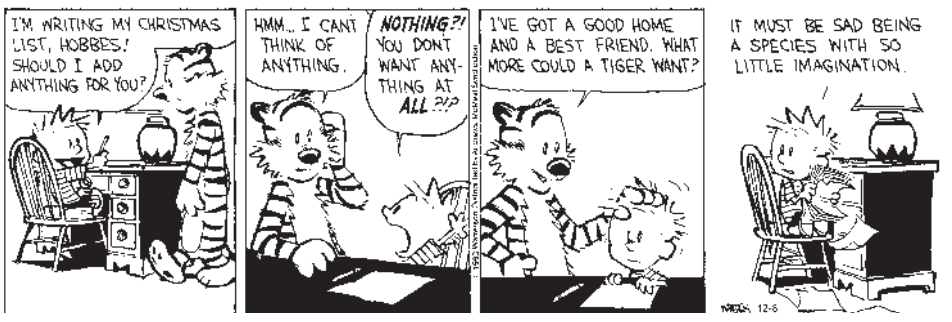
Your daughter is no longer 14. At 18, she is now considered to be an adult, and because the "combatants" are both adults, they should act like it, be civil and refrain from turning their disagreements into open warfare. Your mistake has been allowing yourself to be placed in the middle. A better solution would be to get family counseling if your daughter plans to continue to live with you.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

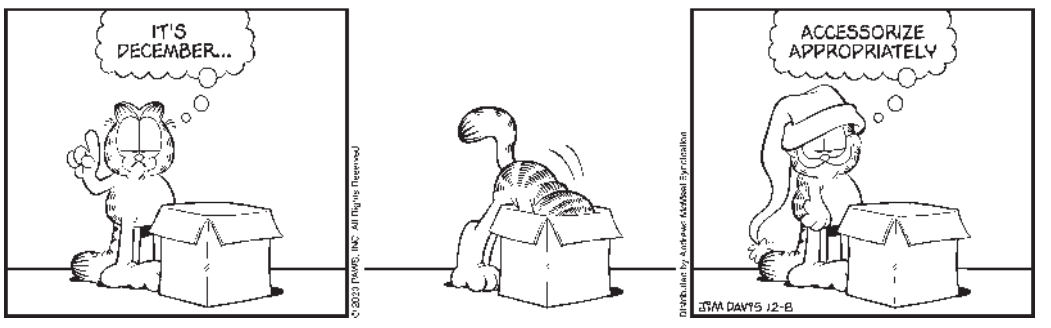
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I'M WRITING MY CHRISTMAS LIST, HOBBES! SHOULD I ADD ANYTHING FOR YOU?
HMM... I CANT THINK OF ANYTHING.
NOTHING?! YOU DONT WANT ANYTHING AT ALL?!?
I'VE GOT A GOOD HOME AND A BEST FRIEND. WHAT MORE COULD A TIGER WANT?
IT MUST BE SAD BEING A SPECIES WITH SO LITTLE IMAGINATION.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

ADAM.
I KNOW THEY'RE COMING, LAURA.
EVERY YEAR ON DECEMBER 6TH, THEY'VE BROUGHT COOKIES.
THE HERSHEY KISS ONES, THE CORNFLAKE WREATHS, THE ONES WITH THE JELLY ON TOP.
ADAM.
THEY CAN'T CREATE A TRADITION AND THEN NOT COOKIE US! 'S NOT RIGHT!
12-8

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

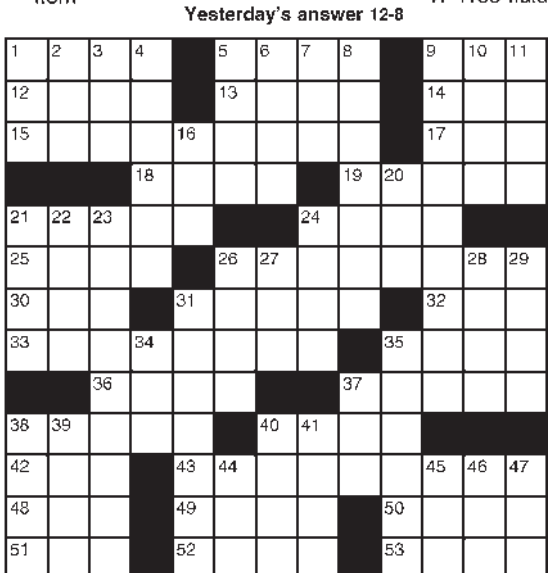
1 Actor Guinness
5 Perched on
9 "Humbug!"
12 "The Martian" actor Michael
13 — Pel
14 Vitamin stat
15 Clan
17 Corn serving
18 "— chic!"
19 Dolphins' home
21 Facing the pitcher
24 Cubicle fixture
25 Noggin
26 Shows created from shows
30 Goof up
31 Start
32 Classic car
33 Boater's safety item
35 Conked out
36 "Understood"
37 Active folks
38 Clip-on beeper
40 Portent
42 Somewhat (Suff.)
43 Some investments
48 Petty peeve
49 Prof's employer
50 Turner or Fey
51 Petrol
52 Bigfoot's cousin
53 Crisp cookie

DOWN

1 NYPD alert
2 Luau souvenir
3 Chang's brother
4 Beach robe
5 Pinnacle
6 Not that
7 Black gold
8 Remittance
9 Escape
10 Comedian Sandler
11 Mata —
16 Gallery display
20 Equal (Pref.)
21 First victim
22 Garr of "Tootsie"
23 Pub brawls
24 Food regimen
26 Old dagger
27 Letter addenda, for short
28 Dread
29 Freshens the lawn, say
31 Purchase too much
34 Jargon suffix
35 Dunkable sweets
37 Dict. info
38 Pong preceder
39 Europe's neighbor
40 Taking action
41 1506, in letters
44 Single
45 French diarist Anais
46 "CSI" find
47 Tree fluid

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-8



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Teala Dunn, 24; Ian Somerhalder, 42; Teri Hatcher, 56; Sir James Galway, 81.

Happy Birthday: Concentrate on work, being responsible and taking care of matters realistically. Refuse to let emotional matters confuse you and those around you. Stick to facts and truth, and find a way to navigate your way through misleading information. Strive to let go of what no longer works for you, and focus on the best way to get ahead and ease stress. Your numbers are 3, 12, 18, 22, 28, 37, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Get up and go. Liberate your mind, take action and make your dream come true. Stop thinking about what you want to aspire to, and start putting your plans in motion. Join forces with someone you love, and good things will transpire. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't let uncertainty slow you down. Embrace what's going on, and turn chaos into order. Consider what you are aiming to achieve, and don't stop until you reach your objective. Turn any negative you face into a positive. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Stick to what you know and do best. Learn from the experiences you have endured, and you will stumble across a better way to handle similar matters. Question motives, ask questions and rely on facts, not hearsay. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Build equity. Add value to your home, or make an investment that will encourage you to use your skills productively. Personal growth and physical improvement will lead to positive results. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take better care of your home, health and relationships. Learn all you can before you commit to someone or something. Expect underlying problems to surface. Back away if you feel pressured. Taking a risk will leave you in a precarious position. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Bypass situations promoting uncertainty, misinformation or indulgent behavior. Distance yourself from people who are a terrible influence. Put your time and effort into self-improvement, seeking knowledge and honing your skills. Personal growth will lead to better relationships. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Associate with people who have something to offer, who make you think and who provide mental stimulation and personal growth. Refuse to let negativity take over or push you in a confusing direction that limits what you can achieve. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Stick to familiar people, places and projects, and offer a unique spin that will lead to new trends and possibilities. Take expert advice and find new ways to use it to your advantage. Set the pace, and proceed with confidence. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take the initiative, and clear space to accommodate something you want to pursue. Create a designated workout room, creative corner or comfortable place to kick back with someone you love. Your effort will make a difference to your emotional well-being. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Keep your emotions under control and your mind on what you are trying to achieve, and bring about the changes that will help you reach your objective. Show compassion and understanding, and offer incentives to gain support. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Focus on your responsibilities and finishing what you start. Use intellect to win support and to get ahead. An enthusiastic approach will help deter anyone trying to get in your way. Uncertainty and vacillation will hold you back. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Ask what you can do for others, not what others can do for you, and you will make a difference. Refuse to get entangled in a situation that is divisive or misleading. Stick to the facts, keep your promises and do your best. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are ambitious, colorful and creative. You are enthusiastic and relentless.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

3		7		8	2	1		
	8	6					4	
1					3			
	1					9		
		9	5		8	7		
		8					2	
			4					8
	3					4	6	
		4	7	1		2		9

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/08

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	6	5	3	9	2	1	7	8
1	7	9	8	4	5	3	6	2
2	3	8	7	6	1	9	5	4
8	9	3	5	2	7	6	4	1
5	2	6	1	3	4	8	9	7
7	4	1	6	8	9	2	3	5
6	5	4	9	1	8	7	2	3
9	8	7	2	5	3	4	1	6
3	1	2	4	7	6	5	8	9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

JOHN LENNON (1940-1980) **Solution: 7 letters**

N	S	O	U	R	W	O	R	L	D	R	E	A	M	I
I	D	G	N	K	L	I	M	S	I	V	I	T	C	A
D	O	A	N	O	A	N	T	H	O	L	O	G	Y	N
E	U	M	L	O	O	P	R	E	V	I	L	E	E	G
B	B	E	M	A	S	K	A	R	M	A	N	M	K	E
U	L	S	T	S	E	B	O	O	K	O	Y	I	R	L
L	E	L	P	P	A	B	R	Y	H	R	W	N	U	T
C	H	B	E	N	N	R	E	J	R	O	O	D	T	S
N	G	A	D	I	A	N	U	A	L	F	R	E	D	I
R	C	N	R	T	T	L	U	L	T	O	K	I	I	F
E	H	J	S	R	I	Q	E	V	O	L	N	N	N	I
V	A	O	A	A	I	H	E	L	P	E	E	A	D	C
A	N	C	N	M	Y	S	A	T	N	A	F	S	I	A
C	C	E	Y	B	D	O	O	G	R	E	A	T	A	P
M	E	W	I	N	S	T	O	N	I	E	T	S	P	E

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Activism, Alfred, Angel, Anthology, Apple, Band, Banjo, Beatles, Bed In, Best, Book, Cavern Club, Chance, Double, Dream, Epstein, Fantasy, Games, Goodbye, Great, Harrison, Hello, Help, Honey, India, Julian, Karma, Liverpool, Love, Martin, McCartney, Milk, Mind, Our World, Pacifist, Peace, Piano, Quarrymen, Sean, Songs, Starr, Turkey, Winston, Work, Yoko Ono

Yesterday's Answer: Tickets

Treasuries 16 and 18 are on sale through the end of the year! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Harden misses Rockets practice amid trade talk

HOUSTON—James Harden was not at the Houston Rockets' first team practice on Sunday due to COVID-19 protocols, first-year coach Stephen Silas said, according ESPN. He didn't show up to his scheduled individual workout on Sunday night, either.

Harden reportedly wants out of the organization and turned down a contract extension that would have made him the first player in NBA history to earn $50 million a year. He has reportedly requested a trade and would prefer to land with the Brooklyn Nets.

The NBA required anyone participating in training camp to quarantine at their homes from Nov. 27 to Dec. 2 ahead of training camp. Individual workouts could begin last week and group training sessions were scheduled to begin on Sunday.

Harden posted photos on Instagram over the weekend of him attending rapper Lil' Baby's birthday party. No one was wearing face masks in the photos posted of the party.

He is expected to have an individual workout at Houston's Toyota Center on Sunday night, Silas said. The coach said he has not recently spoken with the star.

"I'm not exactly sure what hoops he has to jump through in order to practice with the team," Silas said. "I would just say I want him here, and I want him to be a big part of what we're doing. I'm excited to coach him and have him be a part of what we just had out there with a good practice, with a bunch of guys who are working hard on both ends of the floor and had a good vibe about them."

Harden and Russell Westbrook, who was traded last week to the Washington Wizards for point guard John Wall, reportedly spoke with management about their concerns regarding the team's future. They reportedly cited questions about the franchise's direction and the window for a championship.

Inversely, the Rockets were reportedly worried one or both would request a trade—both did indeed ask out, per reports. And Westbrook is already gone.

Silas referenced Harden's commitment with reporters on Sunday, directing them to ask Harden "when he gets here."

The Rockets went through a lot of change in the shortened offseason. Silas replaced Mike D'Antoni after the latter left the organization. General manager Daryl Morey also left, replaced by Rafael Stone.

Nash impressed with KD, Kyrie

The Nets held their first practice of the new season on Sunday, meaning the new championship contender was finally on the court together.

Lead by new head coach Steve Nash, the Nets look to become the top dogs of the East now that a healthy Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving are ready to take the floor together.

"I'm feel very excited and happy for Kevin, who's had the longest layoff and the biggest challenge to overcome a career-threatening injury," Nash said Sunday over Zoom. "He's done everything that could've been asked and he shows a hunger and a desire of how much he loves the sport and wants to compete, so that's been fantastic.

"Kyrie has just been unbelievable with his ability. I mean, his ability is off the charts and to see him sharp and executing today the way we all know he's capable of, but it's still sometimes is a shock to see how beautiful the game is when it's in his hands. But all the guys have worked hard. The vets are leading the way, showing what it takes to be a pro in this league and to come in prepared."

If Durant is able to return to his former-MVP form and Irving can stay healthy this season, the Nets have a legitimate shot of making a deep playoff run and contend for an NBA title.

Irving has only played in 72 games in a single NBA season once. While Durant has logged a full 82 only once, back in 2009-10, he played in 72-plus games in eight of the 12 NBA seasons that preceded 2019-20.

Trail Blazers facility closes

The Portland Trail Blazers are closing their facility after three positive COVID-19 tests within the organization over the past four days. The team announced it Sunday, the day group workouts are first allowed for the 2020-21 season.

"Over the past four days, we have had three positive COVID-19 test results within our organization," president of basketball operations Neil Olshey wrote in a statement. "Out of an abundance of caution, having completed contact tracing, we are closing our practice facility today for deep cleaning while we run confirmatory tests."

Theirs is the first facility to close since any workouts began there on Dec. 1. The Trail Blazers were to open their training camp on Sunday and are scheduled to open their preseason schedule against the Sacramento Kings on Friday.

The New York Knicks closed their facility last month when three employees tested positive and the Golden State Warriors delayed the start of training camp because two players tested positive. The franchise pushed back individual workouts one day and will open team practices on Monday.

The NBA and NBPA announced on Wednesday that 8.8 percent of players tested positive for the coronavirus on the round of testing between Nov. 24-30.

It's nearly double the number of positives the league had in June ahead of the bubble season at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Cases are rising across the United States and experts have warned the worst is yet to come. There has been an average of 191,524 new cases per day over the past week, an increase of 12 percent over the week prior, according to the New York Times.

The league is set to begin its 72-game schedule on Dec. 22.

Zion ready for season

After a year full of restrictions, Zion Williamson appears to be free headed into his sophomore season in the NBA.

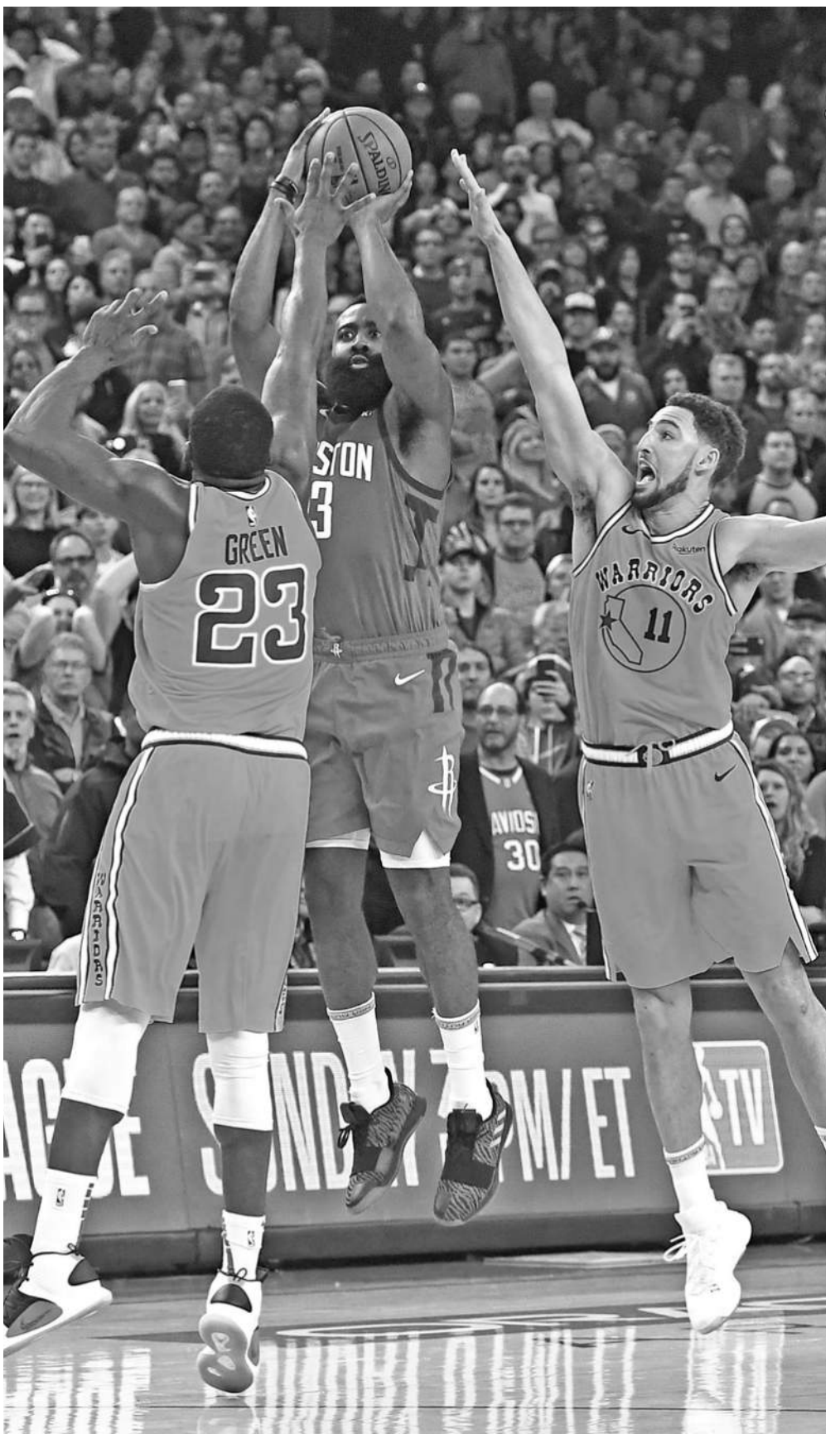
The New Orleans Pelicans star—who underwent knee surgery before last season started and was limited throughout nearly the entire year—said that, as far as he knows, there won't be any minutes restrictions on him this season.

"Me and coach [Stan] Van Gundy have talked and from what I know now, there are no restrictions. None," Williamson said. "Of course [I'm happy about that]. I love to play basketball. With no restrictions? Why wouldn't I love that?"

Williamson underwent a minor knee surgery in October and didn't make his NBA debut until January. He then was placed on "burst restrictions" early during the NBA bubble at Walt Disney World after a family matter forced him to leave the campus just before play resumed— something he said at the time was extremely frustrating.

Despite all of the restrictions, however, Williamson still had an impressive rookie season. The former Duke star averaged 22.5 points and 6.3 rebounds while playing nearly 28 minutes per game in 24 outings.

"I think [this season] definitely will be different because, well, it was tough, man," Williamson said, via ESPN. "When you're going through rehab and when you're finally able to step on the court, three minutes goes by, four minutes by and ... you gotta get subbed out. It was a lot. I tried to make the most of the situation, and I think I did the best that I possibly could. But it's going to be a lot different." ***(AP/NBC)***



AP

In this May 10, 2019 file photo, Houston Rockets' James Harden, center, shoots against Golden State Warriors' Klay Thompson (11) and Draymond Green during the first half of Game 5 of a second-round NBA playoff series in Oakland, Calif.

Giannis' supermax still awaiting signature

MILWAUKEE—Giannis Antetokounmpo had a special birthday gift awaiting him from his teammates after the Milwaukee Bucks' first practice of the 2020-21 training camp on Sunday.

A set of pens.

Yes, Khris Middleton and Pat Connaughton gave the back-to-back league MVP who will make $27 million this season pens. It's a not-so-subtle jab for the Defensive Player of the Year to sign his five-year supermax extension to stay in Milwaukee

"We definitely sung a 'Happy Birthday' after practice. Me and PC thought the perfect gift to him from our teammates is just to give him a pen," Middleton said. "So there were pens in his locker for his birthday present. I told him those should be some of the best birthday gifts he's ever gotten, so hopefully he enjoys it and uses it."

Antetokounmpo turned 26 on Sunday and has until Dec. 21 to sign the extension. He is slated to become an unrestricted free agent after the season ends. He could sign the same deal with the Bucks next summer.

The star has said he wants to stay with the Bucks, but if he actually does appear to fall in part on the Bucks building a contender around him. He told Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet a few months ago:

"It's easy, I want to be a winner. I do not care about the money. My family is fine and I can take care of my children and grandchildren so that's not the most important thing right now, it's winning. As long as we can win and create a winning culture, it will be good."

When asked point blank if he would be with the Bucks next year, he said he didn't know what the plan is and it "depends on the decisions they make."

Milwaukee brought on Jrue Holiday in the offseason and had everyone on the roster report to practice on Sunday. ***(AP/NBC)***

Chiefs rally past Broncos to clinch playoff berth

KANSAS CITY (AP)—Patrick Mahomes threw for 318 yards and a touchdown, Harrison Butker was perfect on five field goals, and Kansas City overcame some red-zone woes and big mistakes that cost them two more scores to hold off Denver, 22-16.

Travis Kelce had eight receptions for 136 yards and the go-ahead TD grab late in the third quarter, and Tyrann Mathieu twice picked off Broncos quarterback Drew Lock—the second with 24 seconds left to seal the win—as the Chiefs clinched a playoff berth by improving to 11-1 for the second time in franchise history.

It took some defense to do it.

The Broncos (4-8) forced the Chiefs to punt after a holding call wiped out Tyreek Hill's 48-yard touchdown reception —he also missed out on a TD because of a coaching gaffe earlier—and Denver managed to move to midfield before stalling. But rather than going for it on fourth-and-3 with 6 minutes to go, coach Vic Fangio elected to punt the ball away.

The Chiefs melted most of the clock before Butker kicked a 48-yard field goal with 1:06 remaining, and the Kansas City defense forced Lock into a wild fourth-down throw that Mathieu intercepted to put the game away.

Lock returned after missing last week's game against New Orleans, along with the rest of Denver's quarterbacks, because of COVID-19 positive tests and contact tracing. The local boy finished with 151 yards passing and two touchdown throws to Tim Patrick, while Melvin Gordon ran for 131 yards on just 15 carries.

AP

Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Tyreek Hill (10) does a back flip into the end zone against the Denver Broncos in the second half of an NFL game in Kansas City, Mo., Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020. The 48-yard scoring play was nullified by an offensive holding penalty.

Browns 41, Titans 35

The NFL's longest active playoff drought is moving closer to an end after 18 seasons.

Baker Mayfield threw for a season-high 334 yards with all four of his touchdown passes in the first half, and Cleveland scored the first 17 points before holding on to beat Tennessee on Sunday to win its fourth straight.

With both chasing AFC playoff berths, the Browns looked like the team leading a division— they are second in the AFC North behind the unbeaten Pittsburgh Steelers—as they improved to 9-3 for the third time in their expansion era.

The Titans (8-4) came in leading the AFC South and left tied after the Colts beat Houston 26-20, though Tennessee still has the better division record. The Titans fell apart after a bad fourth-down spot on their opening drive. NFL rushing leader Derrick Henry lost his first fumble this season on the next drive.

Mayfield kept the Browns from needing the NFL's top rushing offense in what had been expected to be a run-game showdown against the Titans and Henry.

Colts 26, Texans 20

Philip Rivers threw two touchdown passes in the first half and the Indianapolis defense dominated in the second half.

The Texans had a chance to take the lead with about 90 seconds left. They were at the Colts 2 when Deshaun Watson fumbled a low snap and Anthony Walker pounced on it to seal Indy's win.

The Colts (8-4) led 24-20 at the break after Rivers threw TD passes of 21 and 39 yards. Their offense didn't score after that, but the defense held Houston (4-8) scoreless in the second half and Justin Houston added a safety.

The safety was Indy's third this season and the fourth of Houston's career, tying him for the most in NFL history. Houston also had three sacks, three QB hits and forced a fumble.

Watson threw for 341 yards and ran for a score in the first half. But he did not have a touchdown pass for the first time this season and threw an interception after not being picked off in the last six games.

Dolphins 19, Bengals 7

Tua Tagovailoa returned from a thumb injury that forced him to miss one game, throwing for a season-high 296 yards and a score in a game that included five ejections and a benches-clearing confrontation.

The Dolphins lost their best defender when NFL interception leader Xavien Howard was thrown out late in the first half. But they limited Cincinnati to 25 yards after halftime and finished with six sacks. Miami ranks second in the NFL in scoring defense and has allowed 10 points in the past two weeks.

Both benches emptied in fourth quarter after Cincinnati's Mike Thomas was flagged for a foul covering a punt. There was pushing and shoving, and Bengals safety Shawn Williams and Miami receivers DeVante Parker and Mack Hollins were ejected.

Tyler Boyd turned a short pass into a 72-yard touchdown to give the Bengals a 7-0 lead, but he was later ejected following a tussle with Howard.

The Dolphins (8-4) won for the seventh time in eight games to achieve their best 12-game record since 2003. The Bengals (2-9-1) lost their fourth game in a row and are assured of at least nine defeats for the fifth consecutive year.

Tagovailoa improved to 4-1 as a rookie starter with seven touchdown passes and still no interceptions.

Vikings 27, Jaguars 24 (OT)

Dan Bailey kicked a 23-yard field goal with 1:49 left in overtime for Minnesota after he missed two extra points and a 51-yard try with 13 seconds remaining in regulation.

The Jaguars (1-11) lost their 11th straight game.

Harrison Smith set up Bailey's redo with a diving interception at the Jacksonville 46, the fourth turnover of the game by the Jaguars. Jacksonville stayed one game ahead of the winless Jets in the overall standings, trailing New York for the top pick in the next draft.

The Vikings (6-6) kept the playoffs well within reach with their fifth win in six games after their bye despite a steady stream of gaffes.

Justin Jefferson topped the 1,000-yard mark for Minnesota just 12 games into his rookie season, finishing with nine receptions for 121 yards. Adam Thielen had eight catches for 75 yards and a score in his return from a one-game COVID-19 quarantine.

Saints 21, Falcons 16

The Saints finally gave up a touchdown but the defense stood tall at the end to preserve their ninth straight victory and clinch a playoff berth—the first team in the NFL to do so.

The Saints (10-2) clinched with Chicago's 34-30 loss to Detroit.

Making his third straight start in place of Drew Brees, Taysom Hill threw the first two touchdown passes of his career. But his fumble deep in Atlanta territory sparked a Falcons comeback.

Atlanta drove 85 yards, the Saints, capped by Matt Ryan's 10-yard touchdown pass to Russell Gage with 7:43 remaining. New Orleans hadn't allowed a touchdown since the opening drive of a game against San Francisco on Nov. 15, a span of 14 quarters without one.

The Falcons (4-8) got the ball back and again pushed deep into New Orleans territory. On second-and-2 at the Saints 13, Todd Gurley was stuffed for no gain. He got the ball again on third down, trying a sweep around the left end, but Demario Davis caught him for a 7-yard loss. The Falcons threw incomplete into the end zone on fourth down.

Packers 30, Eagles 16

Aaron Jones rushed for 130 yards and delivered a game-clinching 77-yard touchdown run with 2:36 left.

Aaron Rodgers connected with Davante Adams on two of his three touchdown passes and reached a couple of career milestones to help Green Bay (9-3) hand the Eagles (3-8-1) their fourth consecutive loss. Kingsley Keke had two of the Packers' seven sacks.

Green Bay owned a 23-3 lead in the fourth quarter when the Eagles scored two touchdowns in a span of just over a minute. Rookie quarterback Jalen Hurts, who took over for an ineffective Carson Wentz midway through the third quarter, started it by throwing a 32-yard touchdown pass to Greg Ward on fourth-and-18. Jalen Reagor then delivered a 73-yard punt return to cut the lead to 23-16 with 6:30 left, though Jake Elliott missed the extra point.

The Eagles forced a second straight three-and-out, but couldn't move the ball and punted. That's when Jones put away the game.

Rams 38, Cardinals 28

Jared Goff threw for 351 yards, Darrell Henderson ran for a crucial 38-yard touchdown and the Rams moved into a tie for the NFC West lead with Seattle. The Rams (8-4) have won three of four.

Los Angeles had a 24-14 lead early in the fourth quarter and looked like it was going to pull away until Nsimba Webster fumbled on a punt return. The Cardinals quickly turned the mistake into a touchdown on Kenyan Drake's 4-yard run that pulled Arizona within 24-21.

The Rams responded as Henderson sliced through Arizona's defense untouched for the 38-yard score that pushed it to 31-21.

Lions 34, Bears 30

The Lions won their first game under interim coach Darrell Bevell, rallying to beat the slumping Bears.

Adrian Peterson scored from the 5 after Romeo Okwara strip-sacked Mitchell Trubisky with about two minutes left, capping a big comeback. Matthew Stafford threw for 402 yards and three touchdowns for the Lions (5-7), who came away with a wild win following a major shakeup after a Thanksgiving loss to Houston. They fired general manager Bob Quinn and coach Matt Patricia while elevating Bevell, their offensive coordinator.

4 CNMI lifters join Oceania competition

Micronesian Games gold medalist Antonette Labausa led the CNMI Team that participated in the Oceania Weightlifting Federation Online Cup last weekend.

Labausa, who delivered three gold medals for the Commonwealth from the 2018 Micro Games in Yap, posted a total of 167 kg after posting 76 kg in snatch and 94 in clean & jerk.

She was joined in the competition by newcomers Raegine Camacho, Alberto Roberto, and Deion Sabino. Camacho totaled 148 kg behind her 63 kg in snatch and 85 kg in the clean & jerk, while Roberto recorded 65 kg in snatch and 75 kg in clean & jerk for a total of 140 kg. Sabino also did the snatch and clean & jerk, but technical issues in the virtual feed (competition was live) prevented him from recording his results, according to CNMI Weightlifting Federation president John Davis.

The CWF head added that last weekend's tournament was one of the many online tournaments that the Commonwealth's weightlifters have participated in since the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

"CNMI weightlifting wants to thank Anthony Camacho and his family for allowing us to use their residence to conduct our portion of the competition," Davis said.

The OWF Online Cup drew 44 top lifters from 11 eleven countries in Oceania. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Raegine Camacho, Deion Sabino, Alberto Roberto, and Antonette Labausa pose for a photo before joining last weekend's Oceania Weightlifting Federation Online Cup.

Antonette Labausa in the snatch event. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SENDIN

From Page 20

registering 3:30:42.

In the 45 to 49 division, Hernando Cristobal logged 2:52:13 to beat Nelson Pagaduan (2:59:03) and Ronald Villafria (3:29:23). In the 60-and-above age group, Pax Guevarra was the lone finisher to break the three-our barrier with his 2:57:28, as he downed Boboy Aguilar (3:27:18) and Rey Tentia (4:01:58).

Meanwhile, other top age group finishers in last weekend's race were Christopher Sterling (3:46:17) in the 40 to 44 division; Nestor Abing (3:01:58) in the 50 to 54); and Norlo Jacosalem (2:43:50) in the 55 to 59. Jacosalem won over Noel Altamirano (2:45:39), while Abing prevailed against Ric Antonio (3:41:16).

There were also relay races last Sunday with Jacob's Bake Shop & BBQ (2:46:29), Team Estepa (2:55:33), and Team Apol (3:09:58) ruling the men's road bike, mixed road bike, and men's MTB categories, respectively.

2021 Tokyo Olympics to symbolize pandemic end

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga says he will "spare no effort" to ensure a safe and secure Tokyo Olympic Games to show the world that humanity has defeated the COVID-19 pandemic.

His comments come as organizers revealed postponing the Games until next year would cost the Japanese economy an additional $3.8 billion (294 billion yen).

"I expressed my strong determination to host the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in the summer of next year as proof that humanity has defeated the pandemic," Suga said during a video speech at the United Nations General Assembly on Friday.

Organizers have been assessing the financial impact of the delay since the Japanese Government and International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided in March to postpone the Games until 2021.

The IOC has previously said it will contribute $874 million towards covering postponement costs.

This was in addition to the costs announced by Japanese organizers.

"Tokyo's costs are Tokyo's costs," Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshiro Muto said. "Tokyo 2020's [allocation] is revenue that we can secure."

"Within this revenue we have additional sponsorship that we have requested from partners and we also have insurance."

Tokyo 2020 is also falling back on a contingency fund of $350 million, which was detailed in last year's budget to cover costs.

The last official budget given by the organizing committee in December 2019, months before the Games were postponed, was $16.9 billion.

Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori added that the IOC had agreed to waive any additional royalties accrued by new sponsorship deals secured by the organizing committee.

"I had a video conference last night with IOC President Bach," Mori said. "President Bach expressed his strong determination that the IOC and us should work as one team and cooperate to ensure the success of the Games."

The Tokyo Olympic Games are to set open on July 23, followed by the Paralympic Games on August 24.

Meanwhile, Australia's bid for a summer Olympic games in 2032 has taken on a new urgency on the sidelines of the country's deteriorating relationship with China and the prospect of a rival bid from Chengdu-Chongqing.

RECORD

From Page 20

time (20:15) in the third and last qualifying race (held last Nov. 21).

The 17-year-old had a record run in the last weekend's championship race despite a participant's repeated attempts to interfere with the former's running path.

"It was kind of frustrating to see him doing the interference and I am just relieved that race officials saw his violations. Despite his tactics, I tried to stay focused and pushed myself harder," Joson said.

Meanwhile, in the girls U18 division, Cabrera was the undisputed queen of high school races this season.

The SIS student finished the finals race in 22:09—her best record in the competition. Cabrera swept the first three qualifiers, submitting 23:19 in the opening leg, 22:32 in the second, and 22:45 in the third.

SIS grabs boys U18 title

The battle for the top team honors in the boys U18 division was a close one with SIS beating 2019 champion Agape Christian School in the tiebreak.

The team championship was decided by points awarded to the Top 4 finishers of each school and the squad with the lowest score won. The Geckos and Torchbearers ended up scoring 22 points apiece for the deadlock.

Rex Pixley handed SIS 2 points for his second place finish overall after reaching the finish line in 20:20. Samuel Culp (20:51) was ranked No. 4, while Charles McDonald (21:47) and Andrew Sablan (23:06) placed seventh and ninth, respectively.

Agape, on the other hand, got its points from third placer Ray Qi (20:35), No. 5 finisher Eason Tang (21:17), No. 6 Jason Cao (21:31), and No. 8 Samuel He (21:50).

To break the standoff, meet organizers took the results of SIS and Agape's fifth-best finisher. Jimin Woo went on to deliver for the Geckos as his finish time of 23:31 put him at the No. 12 spot, three notches higher than Agape's Peter Hu (24:05).

Joining SIS and Agape in the Top 3 in the boys team category was MHS, which had 35 points, while Mt. Carmel School collected 77 and placed fourth.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan International School's Sam Culp, left, and Rex Pixley, pace the second lead group early into the high school division race in the 2020-2021 Public School System/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series last Saturday at the CPA Airport Field.

Agape keeps girls U18 crown

Agape gained 14 points to retain the girls U18 tiara.

The champion squad finished way ahead of its competitors, as runner-up SIS bagged 34 markers, and MHS and Mt. Carmel tallied 51 and 58, respectively.

Agape was the runaway winner in the division, as it had two runners making it to the podium with Cabrera. Emma Pang placed second with a time of 22:53, while Grace Si came in third after registering 23:21. Eunice Xu (23:35) and Elizabeth Xu (24:29) were ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, for Agape's convincing win.

SIS, after getting a point from Cabrera's first place finish, had Linxi Cai (28:25/No. 9 ranking), Jinnie Thompson (29:43/No.11), and Pyper Liske-Clark (29:59/No.13) completing the Geckos' finishers roster.

Harden misses Rockets practice amid trade talks

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Chiefs rally past Broncos to clinch playoff berth

PAGE 18

Record win for Joson, Cabrera

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
High school runners head out to the course during the finale of the 2020-2021 Public School System/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series last Saturday at the CPA Airport Field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Marianas High School's Josh Joson and Saipan International School's Tiana Cabrera finished the 2020-2021 Public School System/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series in style after making a record run last Saturday at the CPA Airport Field.

Joson completed the 3.1-mile race course in the finale race in 19:44—the fastest this season—to take the top honors in the boys high school division. The MHS student is the lone runner to break the 20-minute barrier in the three-lap course, as he surpassed his

See RECORD on Page 19

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Marianas High School's Josh Joson smiles as he heads to the finish line.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan International School's Tiana Cabrera leads the girls U18 race on her way for the second lap of the course.

Sendin leads MTB finishers in 'Hell'

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Charlie Sendin topped the mountain bike category of the 2020 Hell of the Marianas held last Sunday.

Sendin clocked in at 2:31:12 in the 68-kilometer race that started and ended at the Mariana Resort & Spa and brought bikers to Mobil Tanapag, 5 Corners (Suicide Cliff, Bird Island, Grotto, Banzai Cliff, Radar Tower), La Fiesta, and 4 Corners (Suicide Cliff, Bird Island, Grotto, and Banzai Cliff). The 37-year-old rider reached the finish line more than three minutes ahead of runner-up Noe Valdisimo (2:35:45) and over five minutes against Butch Sublemente (2:37:38).

In the 40-and-under age group, Michael Aparte took the top honors, as he also completed the course under the three-hour mark after posting 2:41:46. At far second was Renzo Avila, who clocked in at 3:14:42, while Kevin Rejano rounded out the Top 3 after

See SENDIN on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Charlie Sendin, seen here in competing in an earlier tournament in Marpi, won the MTB race in last Sunday's Hell of Marianas.